

## RED FLAGS FOR ABUSIVE PERSONALITY

*In the beginning of a relationship some things can initially feel wonderful and be exciting, or not seem like a big deal, but often as a relationship progresses those little things can become big and scary. It often takes time for their abusive characteristic to be revealed.*

CHARACTERISTIC	FEELS EXCITING OR LIKE NO BIG DEAL	FEELS SCARY
<b>Quick Involvement</b>	Comes on very strong. Seems too good to be true. "I've never felt loved like this by anyone." Pressures for an exclusive commitment almost immediately.	You are suddenly living together, pregnant, married or otherwise intertwined when you start to see the other signs.
<b>Extreme Jealousy</b>	Wants to check on you all the time because they care so much and miss you so much. Shows-up just to surprise you. Says you are so beautiful and attractive they are afraid everyone is after you.	Excessively possessive Stalking Isolation Accusations of affairs.
<b>Controlling Behavior</b> <b>Constant Criticism</b>	"You don't have to worry about anything." "Let me spoil you and make the decisions." Uses flattery to get you to change.	"You can't do anything right" "You can't even make a decision on your own."
<b>Hypersensitivity</b>	Appears assertive & confident in dealing with people and problems. Easily angered by issues at work, or stuff on the news, or little accidents at home. Flies off the handle very quickly.	If you complain about anything, your partner accuses you of nagging or blames you for starting the fight. Their feelings are the ones always hurt.
<b>Lack of Accountability</b> <b>Blames Others</b>	Admits past relationships were bad, but it was because the women were crazy and manipulative or to blame. They've been hurt before. Says "you make me angry" instead of "I am frustrated/angry."	It is always someone else's fault if anything goes wrong; yours, the boss, the bank, the police officer... Blames others for their feelings, their problems, abusive behavior, their addiction...
<b>Entitlement</b> <b>Unrealistic Expectations</b> <b>Rigid Roles</b>	"You are the most amazing/perfect person I have ever met." "I can't live with out you." "You know just want I want and need."	All your time and energy goes into making and keeping your partner happy at the sacrifice of your own wants & needs.
<b>Manipulation</b> <b>Dr. Jekyll &amp; Mr. Hyde</b>	"I've been hurt before, and I don't know if I can trust again." "I'm so sorry, I just had a rough day..." "I was just upset I couldn't see you..." "I was just angry at my ex..."	You feel like everyone else thinks your partner is wonderful. Your partner and/or others blame you for the conflict. You feel like you are imagining it, or are the one going crazy. Your partner accuses you of being crazy, or tells others you are crazy.

<b>Intimidation</b> <b>Threats of Violence</b>	"Playful" use of force in sex. Makes statements like 'I'll break your neck' and then dismisses it with 'everybody talks that way,' or 'you just can't take a joke.'	"You don't want to make me mad..." Cruelty to animals and/or children. "If I can't have you no one else can..." "If you ever leave me, it will be the last thing you do..."
<b>Isolation</b>	"I just want to only be with you." "We don't need anyone else, they don't understand what we have." "They are always interfering with our relationship."	Depriving you of phone/car. Preventing you from holding a job, going to school, family & social functions.

### Other Red Flags:

- **No personal responsibility** - always minimizing ("it wasn't that bad"), denying ("I never did that"), making excuses and blaming others (it's your fault I did that), and justifying ("I have a right to be angry;" "You just don't know how to handle someone being angry.")
- **Prejudices, judgmental of others, and rigid thinking** - strong animosity towards certain groups or types of people, not open to others ideas or opinions, and is demeaning and dismissive to others and their ideas, opinions or feelings.
- **Past Battering** - Admits hitting partners in the past, but says they made them do it or the situation brought it on.

### How do I really know?

- **If it seems to good to be true:**
  - Ask trusted friends and family for their opinion and impressions and be open to their feedback. (But remember sometimes other don't see the things you do.)
  - Trust your own instinct -- is your gut telling you something doesn't feel right?
  - Tell your dating partner you want to take things slow, they should be willing to respect that and not push you to jump into things faster than you feel comfortable.
- **How they woos you in the beginning:**
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- **How they use stuff from prior relationships against you:**
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**Remember:** *It may take time for abusive characteristics to come out. Just because you didn't see it in the beginning doesn't mean you are bad in relationships, that you always attract partners like that, or that you deserve to be treated that way. It just means that some abusers are very savvy at maintaining a good image in the beginning. If things start to make you uncomfortable, you have the right to make changes if you are not happy with your life or your relationship.*