



12 Early Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship

And what you can do.

Written by Joanne Robinson

Pressure to commit early on in a relationship

Does he want your commitment or hand in marriage very quickly? Many women, who have find out later on that they were with an abusive partner, committed very early on in the relationship. They were flattered by the attention and allowed their lover to move in after only a couple of weeks or months of dating.

What you can do:

If it is love, then ask yourself what is the rush? Real love takes time to grow, so slow down and find out what the rush is all about. Loneliness and insecurity could be at the root of the rushing as well as a man who needs to gain control of the relationship. By taking your time, you give yourself to see what your relationship is really made up of.

He wants you all to himself

Do you find that he doesn't like you socialising and wants you all to himself? Is he making excuses as to why it's better when you two are alone? Take note of the red flag if you have lost contact with your family and friends.

What you can do:

Healthy relationships thrive from being in a community. You want to be in a relationship where you can involve your friends, family and other communities you are involved with. Involve your friends. Arrange to meet up with another group or couple. Do this from the start and you will figure out from his responses if he is the type that wants to isolate you.

Rigid Ideas about Male and Female Roles

What beliefs and expectations does he have about gender roles? Does he think he is the head of the relationship and it's his job to make all the decisions? Does he put other women down? Does he believe women are not capable of doing anything right and men should be allowed to sort everything out?

What you can do:

It might be nice for a while to take a back seat and let him lead, but eventually his expectations will become controlling and belittling. Ask questions about his expectations of your role in a relationship - don't wait until you have made a commitment to find out. Listen carefully and see how he responds to problems and decision making in relationships. If you are in a healthy relationship, you will work out problems together and he will have a healthy respect for contributions to the relationship.

Excessive Jealousy and Controlling Behaviour

Is he jealous and controlling? Has he told you it's because he loves you so much and that he can't bear anyone else to be near you? Has he started telling how to dress, where to go and who to hang out with? This is not love but control. A healthy relationship is built on trust and freedom, which means he will trust you while you are out with your friends and allow you to develop your full potential. He will support you and not try to stop you from being yourself.

What you can do:

Make sure that you do not interpret control as protection and concern or that his jealousy is a sign of how much he loves you. True love gives freedom. Learn to be comfortable saying no and sticking to your word, make a point of seeing your friends and family even if you do wish to spend the extra time with your date. If you give in to his jealousy and control you set up a pattern for your relationship in the future. If you learn to be assertive and have a good connection with other people who care about you, you will be in much better position to see if he has a manipulative and controlling side to him. And keep wearing your favourite clothes!

Unrealistic Expectations

He expects you to be the perfect woman. You are expected to meet his every needs and if you make any mistakes you are heavily penalised for it. He will then withdraw, sulking, use put downs etc to punish you.

What you can do:

How do you feel about making mistakes? Do you put a lot of pressure on yourself to be perfect? Clear any expectations of yourself that are demanding. Challenge his expectations of what he wants from you and set limits on his unrealistic expectations. This is much easier to do early on in the relationship, so learn to live with boundaries and let yourself off the hook when you make mistakes and you will find it easier to deal with people when they make too many demands of you.

Hypersensitivity

He is easily insulted and often takes the slightest set back as a personal attack. It feels as if you are walking on egg shells and fear upsetting him.

What you can do:

Rather than trying to appease him and adapt to his sensitivity, confront the issue with him. If his behaviour causes you fear and you can see that you are unable to work through issues with him, it may be time to stand back and ask yourself if this is what you want to live with. All relationships will have conflict and as we are all imperfect, we will disappoint each other at times. What you are looking for is someone that understands this and will not take it as a personal attack.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Does he have a quick temper? Do you notice he has sudden mood changes? Never knowing what mood he is going to be in when you see him or wondering when he will lose his temper (and anything can set him off) should be viewed as another red flag.

What you can do

A quick temper and sudden mood swings are characteristics that make it very difficult for anyone to deal with. Some women try and calm, smooth and make excuses for their partner's anger and avoid anything that will set them off. Once these traits start to surface, it's extremely important you set limits on it. Tell your partner you will not tolerate violence or his angry temper. Yes, people get angry but explosive, tempers and sudden mood swings are a warning of what is to come later on. Nip it in the bud before it gets out of hand and move on.

Blames Others

Does he have a tendency to blame everyone and anything for his problems? Does his behaviour somehow become your fault? Does he say that you made him do it or he would not have acted that way or said the things he did, if you would just change your ways?

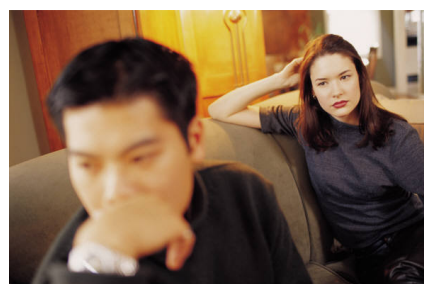
What you can do

If you notice he never takes responsibility, take it as any early warning sign that eventually he will be blaming you for everything that goes wrong in his life too. Relationships require the ability to work through conflict and if you are with someone that blames you for everything it will eventually tear down your self esteem. You will start to feel there is something wrong with you and that you are worthless. Choose someone that will build you up and can say sorry without blaming you in the same breath.

Sexually Demanding

He forces you to have sex with him against your will. He puts you down if you do not have sex with him. He does not respect you and is only interested in gratifying his sexual needs. He does not care about the consequences of the sexual act or how you feel about it.

What you can do Say no to disrespect. If he puts you down or forces you against your will then now is the time to get out. This is sexual abuse. Don't make excuses or hope he will change if you wait to see what happens.



Background

What do you know about his background? Does he have a history of abusive relationships? How does he talk about his past relationships? Does he blame everything on his previous dates?

What you can do

If he has a history of hurting women, beware that eventually you may be his next victim. Without some sort of long term interventions such as counselling, the chances are that his hurtful cycle of relationships will continue with you. Don't fall into the trap of believing that things will be different with you or buy into the line that they were the ones with all the issues. This is another clear sign that he cannot see his own behaviour and eventually will be the next one he will be blaming for the way he is treating you.

Self Coaching Cards

*Do I struggle letting people see
the real me?*

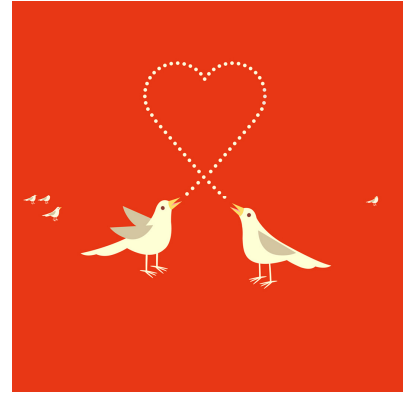
*What are my reasons and what
needs healing and change?*

*What one small thing can I do
differently today and let the real
me shine?*

By Donna Intera

Visit www.donnaintera.co.uk for more details and to order on line

More Things You Can Do



Self Esteem

If you feel wrong, bad, and never good enough you are more prone to be vulnerable to abusive types of people.

Work on knowing that you are a woman of value and that you are equal to others.

Say no

Learn to be comfortable saying no to people. When you say no you will find out whether others can respect your limits. If you always adapt to others needs then you may find others around you are the selfish types who don't get involved in your life as well.

Involve your community

Learn to build friendships with safe people who care about you. If you spend a lot of time on your own or withdraw from people, you might find your loneliness will make you more accepting of types of men that you would not choose if you didn't feel so lonely. Great friends will let you know they love you and make you feel part of a community.

Be yourself on your date

Learn to like yourself and feel comfortable being who you are. If you hide and pretend to be someone you are not, then you will attract guys that are looking for those traits and not the person you really are.

Set Limits

Learn to set consequences when you are being mistreated and disrespected. Rather than keep accepting apologies and taking him, let the other person feel the consequences of mistreating you. For example, you will not go forward with the relationship until he addresses the reasons he keeps hurting you. Or if he keeps putting you down in front of friends, you tell him you will drive in your own car to the party and if he does it again you will leave. By setting limits you will feel empowered rather than a victim of his mistreatment.

Ask for help

Don't allow yourself to feel ashamed about what is happening to you. It doesn't make you bad person or stupid for not seeing it coming. The worst thing you can do is allow shame to keep you from reaching out. Get support – it will help you feel empowered and make the changes you need to protect yourself from further escalated attacks.

Don't ignore your intuition

Don't ignore your conscience or how you feel around your partner. If you feel increasingly fearful, mistrustful or feel a sense of danger around him address why you feel the way you do.

Challenge your beliefs about love

Some of our beliefs about love can be landing us in trouble. Perhaps we think we should always keep the peace. That love conquers all or the right person will meet all our needs and make us happy. Find out what beliefs and myths you have about love that could be leading you into unfulfilling relationships.

Emotional Wounds

If you have a backlog of broken relationships and are still hurting, taking time out to take care for yourself for a while is a good thing. By clearing the past you create a better path for your future relationships.

Discerner of Character

Learn to spot the red flags, make a list of values you want in a mate and use these to help you find out if he is the type of person you want to give your heart to.



Do you need Support?

Are you?

- + Tired of making the same mistakes in relationships?
- + Can't find the right person to settle down with?
- + Lost direction in life?
- + Want to be confident about who you are and where you are going?

Perhaps you would like to

- + Increase Your Self Esteem
- + Learn how to live a full and satisfying life whether single or married
- + Break the cycle of unhealthy relating
- + Develop problem solving and communication skills

Then why not consider

Personal Coaching with Joanne Robinson

Weekly 1 hour Telephone Support
Unlimited Emails
Weekly Coaching Summary
Handouts and worksheets

Cost £35. 00 per session

Summer Break Special! (Till 31st August 2008)

First six sessions at **£25.00** per session!

Contact Joanne **now** by email:

mail@donnaintera.co.uk

Visit www.donnaintera.co.uk

Relationship Coaching, Training, Counselling, Educational Newsletters and Self Coaching Cards
for women who want to live confident lives and have successful relationships!