



Warning Signs– Character Traits of An Abuser

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1. Jealousy: At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser will always say that jealousy is a sign of love: jealousy has nothing to do with love, it is a sign of insecurity and possessiveness. The abuser will question her about who she talks to, accuse her of flirting, or be jealous of time she spends with family, friends, or children. As the jealousy progresses, the abuser may call her repeatedly at work (or home) or drop by unexpectedly. The abuser may refuse to let her work for fear she will meet someone else, or exhibit other strange behaviors (like checking her car mileage or asking friends to watch her).

2. Controlling Behavior: At first the batterer will say that this behavior is because of concern for the woman's safety, her need to use her time well, or her need to make good decisions. The abuser will be angry if the woman is "late" coming back from the store or an appointment, or will question her closely about where she went, and who she talked to. As this behavior gets worse, the abuser may not let the women make personal decisions about the house, her clothing or going to church, may keep all the money or even require she ask permission to leave the house or room.

3. Quick Involvement: Many battered women dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were engaged or living together. The abuser comes on like a whirlwind, "you are the only person I could ever talk to, I have never felt loved like this by anyone." The abuser's need is desperate and will pressure the woman to commit to the relationship.

4. Unrealistic Expectations: The abuser becomes dependent on the woman for all needs. He expects her to be the perfect wife, mother, lover, and friend. The abuser will say things like "If you love me, I am all you need, you are all I need." The woman is automatically expected to know each emotional and physical need of the abuser.

5. Isolation: The abuser attempts to isolate the woman from all personal and social resources. If she has men friends, she is a "whore"; if she has women friends, she is a lesbian; if she is close to family, she is tied to apron strings. The abuser claims that people who are supportive of her are troublemakers and may want to live in the country without a phone, or may not let her use the car, or try to keep her from working or going to school.

6. Blames Others for Problems: If the abuser is chronically unemployed, it is always someone else's fault. The abuser may make mistakes and then blame the woman for being distracting or upsetting. The woman may be blamed for anything that goes wrong.

7. Blames Others for own Feelings: The abuser will tell the woman "you make me mad," "you're hurting me by not doing what I ask," "I can't help being angry." The abuser will use feelings to manipulate the woman. Harder to recognize are claims such as "you make me happy". The message in each case is "you control how I feel".

Information Taken
from:

Knowtheredflags.org