



# Warning Signs– Character Traits of An Abuser continued

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Needs  
Options  
Warnings  
Learn  
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Danger  
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**8. Hypersensitivity:** The abuser is easily insulted and claims that feelings are "hurt" when actually s/he's really angry, or the abuser interprets the slightest setbacks as personal attacks. The abuser will "rant and rave" about the injustice of things that have happened - things that are really just part of living like being asked to work overtime, getting a traffic ticket, being told that something he does is annoying, being asked to help with chores.

**9. Cruelty to Animals or Children:** The batterer may punish animals brutally or be insensitive to their pain; or may expect children to be capable of doing things far beyond their ability (whips a two year old for wetting their diaper) or may tease young children until they cry. (60% of men who beat their partners, also beat their children). The abuser may refuse to interact with the children by not allowing them to eat at the table or expecting them to stay in their rooms in the evenings.

**10. "Playful" Use of Force in Sex :** The abuser may like to throw the woman down and hold her during sex, or may want to act out fantasies during sex where the woman is helpless. The idea of rape may excite the abuser. The abuser may show little concern about whether the woman wants to have sex and use sulking or anger to manipulate her into compliance. The abuser may start having sex with the woman while she is sleeping, or demand sex when she is ill or tired.

**11. Verbal Abuse:** In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, the abuser may verbally degrade the woman by cursing her or diminishing her accomplishments. The abuser may tell her that she's stupid and unable to function on her own. This may involve waking her up to verbally abuse her or not letting her sleep.

**12. Rigid Sex Roles:** The batterer expects a woman to serve him; and may require that she stay at home, that she obey in all things - even things that are criminal in nature. The abuser sees women as inferior, and unable to be a whole person without a relationship.

**13. Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde:** Many women are confused by their abuser's sudden change in mood -- they will describe the abuser's behavior as "nice" one minute, but the next minute "explosive" or "crazy". Explosiveness and mood swings are typical of batterers and are related to other characteristics such as hypersensitivity.

**14. Past Battering:** The batterer may admit to hitting previous partners, but will blame their partner for provoking the attacks. The woman may hear from relatives or ex-spouses of previous abuse. The fact is, a batterer will beat any partner: situational circumstances do not make a person abusive.

**15. Threats of Violence:** This would include any threat of physical force meant to control the woman. "I'll slap your mouth off," "I'll kill you," "I'll break your neck." Most intimate partners do not threaten their mates, but a batterer will try to excuse this behavior by saying "everybody talks like that".

**16. Breaking or Striking Objects:** This behavior is used as punishment (breaking loved possessions), but is mostly used to terrorize the woman into submission. The abuser may beat on tables with fists, throw objects around or near the woman. Again, this is remarkable behavior in that only immature people beat on objects in the presence of other people in order to threaten them.

**17. Any Force During an Argument :** This may involve a batterer holding a woman down, physically restraining her from leaving the room, or pushing or shoving. (The abuser may hold the woman against a wall and say "you're going to listen to me").