

Most abusive people are wonderful in the beginning of a relationship. So, how do you know if you are actually walking into a healthy and loving relationship or an abusive one?

Warning Signs and Red Flags

There are many warning signs and red flags that can help us identify abusive behavior. Most women who have experienced abuse can look back and see the signs they missed or ignored. Here are **a few** of the most common warning signs to look for.

A push for quick involvement: He's charming and comes on very strong in the beginning, lavishing attention on you and claiming he's never loved anyone like this before. An abuser pressures for an exclusive commitment almost immediately.

Demands details about how you spend your time: While it's normal for a partner to express interest in your day, it's not okay for a partner to demand to know details of every minute of the day.

Invasion of your privacy: He might look through your phone, purse, or all your social media. He might not allow you to have a private conversation.

Unrealistic expectations: Expects you to do everything perfectly.

Criticizes you or what's important to you: Partners who put down or belittle your beliefs are not respectful partners. It's healthy to have challenging conversations about ideas, it's not OK to be told how you should think, feel or believe.

Blames others for problems or mistakes: If he admits to having been physically abusive with his partner, no matter what excuse or explanation he gives you, this is a **red flag** to step away from the relationship.

Hypersensitivity: He is easily insulted, claiming that his feelings are hurt when he is mad about not getting his way.

Rigid male/female roles: He may have very specific ideas about how you should behave, like he's the man and has the right to tell you how to behave.

Sudden mood swings: Switches from sweetly loving to explosively angry or violent in a matter of minutes, or even more confusing, within seconds.

Subtle threats: Makes statements like, "I just don't know what I would do if you left me."

To be a red flag, they must become a pattern that over time undermines who you are, your value, and your self-worth.

Vulnerabilities for walking into these relationships

No one plans to get into an unhealthy relationship. We want to believe the best in others. But, that's not always possible. There are many broken people in the world. Our brokenness can make us vulnerable in recognizing unhealthy behaviors. Here are **a few** reasons you may find yourself in an abusive relationship.

You grew up in a home where abuse was witnessed and/or experienced: Abuse damages children. It causes them to grow up with low self-esteem. It can make them vulnerable to use drugs and alcohol. When you grow up in a home where abuse is present, it's very hard to understand what is and isn't healthy behavior.

Your need for love and acceptance go unmet: You might find yourself looking in the wrong place to meet that need. You might even excuse certain behaviors from your abusive partner because they seem normal or not as bad as you grew up with.

You've experienced trauma: Trauma at any point in your life can make you vulnerable. Not all women have experienced abuse growing up, yet they might find themselves in an abusive relationship because of a trauma experienced later in life. Trauma disconnects us from being able to detect danger.

You feel like you always need to fix others: This can lead you right into an abusive relationship because abusive men are very broken. If you are a compassionate person, and you see this man hurting, your heart goes out to him. You want to help him feel better. *Abusive men can take advantage of your willingness to help.*

Wrap Up

If you find you're missing warning signs that land you in abusive relationships, or if you recognize vulnerabilities in yourself, ***show yourself some compassion***. It's never too late to take a new path. Being a caring person is great, but you need to know your limits. You should never risk yourself for others. Evaluating your relationship and stepping away from any unhealthy relationship **is hard**. ***But you can do it!***