



# **Backlash**

**Emotional abuse, verbal abuse, and domestic violence are on the rise, especially among young people. The risk of falling into an abusive relationship is greater than ever.**

There are obvious red flags to avoid in a prospective lover, such as angry, controlling, possessive, jealous, or violent behaviour. Unfortunately, most abusers are able to mask these tendencies in dating.

By the time many people notice the obvious red flags, they're already attached to an abuser, which makes it much harder for them to leave the relationship.

*Note: During the early stages of your relationship, your partner is not likely to do any of these things to you. But witnessing these attitudes and behaviours toward others is a sure sign that they will turn onto you, sooner or later.*

## **Very Early Warning Sign #1: A Blamer**

Avoid anyone who blames his negative feelings and bad luck on someone else. Special care is necessary here, as blamers can be really seductive in dating. Their blame of others can make you look great by comparison: "You're so smart, sensitive, caring, and loving, not like that bitch I used to go out with."

The Law of Blame: It eventually goes to the closest person. When you become the closest person to him, the blame will certainly turn on you.

## **Very Early Warning Sign #2: Resentment**

Resentment is a negative mood caused by focus on perceptions of **unfairness**. Resentful people feel like they are not getting the help, consideration, praise, reward, or affection they believe is due them.

## **Very Early Warning Sign #3: Entitlement**

People with a sense of entitlement believe that they deserve special consideration and special treatment. They may cut in front of others waiting in line, smoke wherever they want, drive any way they want, say anything they like, and do pretty much anything they choose.

## **Very Early Warning Sign #4 Superiority**

Superiority is the implication, at least through body language or tone of voice, that someone is better than someone else. Potential abusers tend to have hierarchical self-esteem, i.e., they need to feel better than someone else to feel okay about themselves. They need to point out ways in which they are smarter, more sensitive, or more talented than others. This, too, can be seductive in dating, as he will point out ways in which you are superior, too.



# **Backlash**

## **Very Early Warning Sign #5: Pettiness**

If he makes a big deal out of nothing or focuses on one small, negative aspect of an issue, a relationship with him will be disastrous. This might show itself as being extremely particular about how his food is prepared in a restaurant or seeming impatient if someone drops something.

In a love relationship, his petty attitudes and behaviour will make you feel reduced to some small mistake, as if nothing you have ever done right in your life matters. You will feel criticized and diminished for the smallest of infractions, real or imagined.

## **Very Early Warning Sign #6: Sarcasm**

Sarcasm comes in many forms. In an abusive relationship, it is used to undermine a perspective the sarcastic person doesn't agree with or to shake someone's confidence, just for a temporary ego gain or some strategic advantage in a negotiation.

Sarcastic people tend to be heavy into impression management, always trying to sound smart or witty. Their tone always has at least a subtle put-down in it. In dating this will be directed at others. In a relationship, it will center on you.

## **Very Early Warning Sign #7: Deceit**

The exaggerator really wants to develop qualities you like; he's just not quite there, yet.

## **Very Early Warning Sign #8: Minor Jealousy**

He's slightly uncomfortable when you talk to or even look at another man. He might not say anything, but he looks uncomfortable. The tough thing about minor jealousy in dating is that you actually want a tiny bit of it to know that they other person cares.

Think of it as a drop of powerfully concentrated liquid in a huge bucket of water. More than a tiny drop will poison any relationship you might develop with the jealous person and, more important, put you in harm's way.



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### **Very Early Warning Sign #9: Rusher**

I have had clients complain that their boyfriends don't pursue them or try to sweep them off their feet. I always tell them, "How lucky you are!"

Guys who go "too fast", do not respect boundaries. One definition of "abuse" is "that which violates personal boundaries." It is not flattering that someone wants you so much that he does not care about whether you are comfortable. Make sure that any man you become interested in shows respect for your comfort-level, in all senses of the word.

### **Multiple-Victimization**

**Research shows that if a woman has been mistreated in the past, even in childhood, there's a good chance that she'll be mistreated in her next relationship as well.**