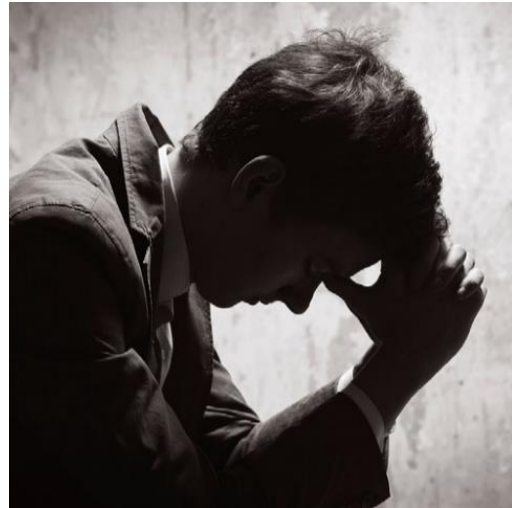


Is Your Relationship Poisoning You?

Every now and again you meet a person you want to get to know better. You pursue the relationship and end up involved, only to discover that the relationship only brings negativity. This situation might happen in a close friendship or love relationship.

How can you tell you're in a toxic relationship? If you realize you're in a relationship that's poisoning you, what will you do?

Review the information below to help you handle such challenging relationships.



Signs You're in a Toxic Relationship

1. **You question your own feelings.** You're second-guessing yourself about how to act and what to say.
2. **You experience signs of physical and emotional upset.** When you're with the person, your stomach hurts or you feel anxious, or lethargic.
3. **Feelings of confusion become common.** You're unsure about what's going on with you. Sometimes, you feel you don't know which end is up when it comes to your relationship.
4. **The relationship is negatively unpredictable.** For example, you thought your friend would be happy you arrived early to go shopping but instead, she was irritated.
5. **One or both of you consistently say hurtful things.** Emotionally, it's like a roller coaster. Too many damaging, unforgettable, angry words have been said. There are plenty of ups and downs and the downs are getting harder to take.
6. **You've had an angry physical exchange with the person.** She's literally pushed you or she's thrown her cell phone at you. Maybe you've gotten physical, too.
7. **When with the person, you engage in unhealthy behaviors.** Whether it's drinking too much, shopping more than you should, or not being honest with others to spend time with the person, *it's obvious to you that they are pulling you to a "dark side."*

If you're experiencing any of these situations, you're in a relationship that's having some pretty devastating effects. What can you do about it?

What To Do if You Believe You're in a Toxic Relationship

1. **Give yourself some time away to focus.** Take at least two days without having any contact with the person. How do you feel?
2. **Have confidence.** *Remember that you've had tough times before and worked through them one way or the other.*
3. **Decide whether you still want the person in your life.** Have things between the two of you gone so far that they can't be corrected?
4. **Write down the top three issues that trouble you.** Doing so will help you be clear with yourself about what is discouraging about the relationship. *Getting your thoughts and ideas in order will lift the fog of confusion and bring you clarity and confidence.*
5. **Examine your own actions.** What are you doing to perpetuate the difficulties? Be brutally honest with yourself about what part you play in the worrisome relationship. *Allow yourself to look within yourself and discover your own unhealthy behaviors.* Vow to work on your own issues and get them resolved.
6. **If you believe the relationship can change, talk directly with the other person** about the issues that upset you. Be specific. Use a neutral tone of voice.
 - For example, say something like, "I've realized that it hurts my feelings whenever you stand me up when we have plans, like last Wednesday. It's happened several times and in the future, I want you to call me if you're not going to show up."
 - *Being open about your feelings with the other person will strengthen your convictions to do something about the issue.*
7. **Seek professional help.** If you're unable to resolve the challenges on your own, you might want to call a mental health professional. They can help you clarify your feelings and enable you to overcome the toxicity.

Even though you may find you're in a toxic relationship, you can endeavor to resolve the challenges. Embrace responsibility for your own actions and choices in life. Everything will get better and you'll finally experience the tranquil life you desire!