



## Control Patrol

Lately there has been a great discussion about abusive relationships. And, yes, these can be classified as violent, but I want to bring out the point that these relationships are also an example of negative control. This is an example of

someone attempting to have some manner of control of their own life by having control over someone else's life. This is about maintaining this control through manipulation, isolation, domination, restraint, degradation, and mental and physical power.

A controller is not someone who just likes controlling others for kicks. A controller *needs* to control in order to raise their own self-esteem. They *need* to increase their own sense of security. They *need* to make themselves more confident and, yes, in more control of *their* life. Unfortunately, the controller achieves many of these goals by controlling someone else. Need I say this is not a healthy behavior?

To make their lives easier, a controller usually will gravitate to a person who may have problems with their self-esteem or a have an already existing low self-esteem. Usually a person with a healthy self-esteem can catch on to a controller's behavior and not tolerating it, puts an end to the potentially dangerous relationship.

So what are some main behavioral signs that clue you into knowing there is a controller on your doorstep?

Initially a controller will "kill you with kindness", being very attentive and thoughtful, practically fulfilling your every need. They are masters of manipulation. They have you thinking- this is the one- the one true love- the one true friend. Maybe they are. There are people out there who are truly sweet and kind and giving and helpful. But if some (or all) of the following indicators start piling on the relationship- beware.

Are you becoming isolated? Do you find that this person always has something planned and the plans include you? Especially if you had something planned with old friends or even relatives? You are finding more and more time is being spent with this person. Do you miss seeing those other people?

Is this person instilling doubt in your mind about these close friends and relatives, pointing out negative traits (real or false) at every opportunity and spreading rumors and lies? Controllers are liars. They will lie to further your isolation and promote your dependence upon them. Controllers also lie to inflate their ego. They are never wrong and know all the answers. If they have to they will create the "facts" to suit their purposes.

Are they strongly suggesting a "new look" (different clothes, different haircut)? With time, they can even go as far as criticizing and trying to change your behavior, philosophies, and religion. Over time that wonderfully attentive person is changing into a demanding, criticizing, stubborn, jealous person. Are you even realizing that your self-esteem is suffering from a meltdown? You are thinking you are not smart enough, pretty enough, good enough; I am lucky to have him/her. A person that cannot ask questions; cannot socialize with people you enjoy; unable to express a different idea; discuss opinions or just say no is not in a healthy relationship.

You are reading this saying, "well, of course this is all obvious", and that you would end this relationship in a heartbeat. But it isn't that obvious, this is happening insidiously. This behavior is seeping into your life, into your self-perception, into your emotional core. You don't realize your self-esteem is starting to erode. This is why it is so very important to know and recognize these behavioral signs early and take action.

If no action is taken and this is a "friendship" you will feel miserable. You will become a "non-person" who robotically follows this controller wherever and however they dictate.

If this is a love relationship this may quickly turn into an abusive relationship. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at the end of 2013 found 25% of women and 14% of men were victims of physical violence initiated by an intimate partner. (These numbers don't include the unreported, threatening behavior, or mental/emotional abuse incidents.) As of September 2014, The Bureau of Justice Statistics reinforces that 25% of women are victims of domestic violence and on average 3 females and 1 male are murdered by their partner each day.

Abusers *need* that complete control over their partner's life. They have to be completely in charge. The abused partner settles into a life of tip-toeing around their partner, struggling not to make that misstep that will set off another round of abuse. The abused partner may take the blame for the abusive incident, thinking that they were the one

that produced the abusers violent behavior, due to their now lowered self-esteem. If the abuser has a substance abuse problem, the abused will blame the alcohol or the drugs. Not so, the addictive substance lowers inhibitions, making the abuser more likely to exhibit their existing personality disorders.

If you find yourself in a controlling friendship or love relationship extricate yourself, sooner than later. If you realize you are in an abusive relationship, it may be difficult to leave, but it is for your own safety that you do. You are not alone. Tell a friend(s) or a relative(s) about the situation and set up a distress code word between you if you are in trouble before you can leave. There are organizations that can help, give you information and/or a place to stay while you get back on your feet. In danger: CALL 911.

REMEMBER: PHYSICAL VIOLENCE SHOULD NEVER BE TOLERATED.

**“Nobody deserves your tears, but whoever (you think) deserves them will not make you cry.”**  
--- **Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

*With Gratitude,*  
*Kai*

TAKE ACTION BOX INFO:

1. Call The National Domestic Violence 24/7 Hotline BEFORE things get bad. DON'T under-estimate the situation. Get your advice before it's too late to call.
2. In DANGER, call 911.
3. Set up a "go bag" with your important documents (birth cert., social security card, ID, Driver's license, etc. If there are children, include their documents) that you can grab if you have to leave quickly. (You may have to leave this at a friend or relatives if your things are consistently searched.)
4. Instruct children never to get in the middle of an argument, as they will be endangering themselves.