



Stuck in a toxic partnership

Do you really want to waste the rest of your life and be unhappy because of a wedding ring and a shared home? Here are some alarm signals that show you that it is high time to get out of a relationship.

- You constantly excuse her/his behavior, especially towards you. She/he treats you like sh.... and you find reasons why this is justified ("she/he must have had a bad day...her/his mother annoyed her/him again...I did something wrong"). She/he blames you for her/his stress, for her/his problems, even for her/his bad behavior, twists your words around and keeps you in the dark about herself/himself. He/she does not communicate "transparently" and uses the resulting insecurity to make you feel guilty.
- You constantly feel you have to "earn" your partner's love. He/she constantly keeps you on your toes with activities or demands. You have neither the time nor the leisure to come to yourself.
- He/she constantly disregards your feelings or dismisses them as insignificant ("You are much too sensitive...why do you get so upset?"). She/he is physically present but not emotionally engaged.
- You think more and more often about what it would be like to have a relationship with a known person whom you find physically attractive.
- There is no more stimulating conversation for both sides.
- He/she does not respect your privacy. He/she reads your emails, checks your mobile phone and even hacks your computer. He/she even tries to badmouth people who are important to you or forbid you from contact with them.
- Your partner does not support your dreams, but always finds a reason why they are doomed to fail. Your partner tries to keep you in the "status quo" out of fear of losing the comforts associated with your person and blocks your personal development. In order to prevent you from realizing your dreams, he/she even uses your (adult!) children or brings in external persons as moralizers ("If you do this, you are a bad father/mother"..... what are people supposed to think").
- He/she more and more often gives you the "silent treatment" and refuses to communicate at all.

If you recognize your partnership in the points mentioned above, you are dealing with a manipulative and emotionally abusive partner who may also constantly "belittle" you in order to look great in his/her own eyes. Refusal to communicate in particular is a passive-aggressive form of emotional abuse, a manipulative way of punishing someone. Such non-speaking says a lot about the manipulative character of such a person.

The same applies to constant criticism, for example, of what you do, how you do it, how you look, what you have achieved or want to achieve. I am not talking about constructive criticism, which is aimed at supporting the achievement of your goals. Manipulative criticism is aimed at taking away your self-confidence and lowering your self-worth.

How did you get into such a partnership and were you able to put up with it until now?

Does it seem suspicious to you when there are no quarrels or misunderstandings for a few days, when your partner is not disgruntled or moody? Then you do indeed have a distorted image of a loving partner. It is very likely that you have inherited this distorted image of a loving partner from your parents' relationship or have retained your parents' treatment of you as a child. Your current partnership is what you learned as a child. Such a toxic "pattern" can, for example, accept a lack of security and warmth as "normal" as long as the material stability that children also need is given. You have adopted the same pattern in your choice of partner later in life. He/she provides you with material security, which is coupled with the characteristics of the parent who emotionally abused you as a child, for example moodiness, unpredictability or emotional coldness.

How can you free yourself?

In a book on Taoism I found the following advice for parents about what children urgently need besides physical and mental tasty and varied food: *"Love for a child should shine like the sun - on light and dark sides alike - completely without judgement. Every leaf of a plant is important. If love is only allocated as a reward for particularly decorative blossoms, the child learns that only certain sides of him are lovable and lets all other qualities wither away. It becomes love-hungry, addicted to recognition, vain, manipulable and insecure."*

Be aware of the following: A "normal" child needs a sense of security in connection with being unconditionally accepted and loved by its parents. If a child does not get this, it will search for it throughout its life. And will not find it as long as the person keeps choosing partners who are just as emotionally manipulative and abusive as the mother, father or both parents were back then. You have probably self-sabotaged a relationship with truly loving partners over and over again, because instead of true love you have always followed the unhealthy pattern of your childhood. You had no choice then, but now you can claim your right to find true love.

Being married to someone doesn't entitle to ownership. If your partner reads your mails, checks your mobile phone, hacks your computer or forbids contact with others, you are dealing with a control freak. Love is the opposite of that. Love allows personal healthy boundaries, gives you space to explore, learn and grow in the world without fear of judgement. Your feelings and perceptions deserve respect. Trust your own feelings and perceptions and no longer allow your partner to simply override them. Don't blame yourself for not having enough patience to wait for your partner to change. You don't owe anyone precious time of life and definitely not your mental and emotional health.

A partnership remains happy if you invest time and effort, make compromises, show respect for the other person, speak honestly with each other and work on yourself - as long as you both do that. However, you don't need a partner who manipulates you emotionally and only uses you for his own purposes. Be patient with yourself, detaching yourself is a process that - depending on the role material security plays for you - takes more or less time. You are strong enough on your own and can free yourself if you keep aware of your "pattern" (which can be very painful). You have like every human being unique gifts to achieve material stability even without an abusive partner.

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