**How To Tell If You’re Being ‘Manipulated’ In A Relationship?**

Have you ever been in a relationship that made you feel like you were not in control? Not of the relationship, but your own feelings, thoughts, and actions? You wake up one morning and start to question your entire belief system. Because apparently, things that you thought you would never agree to, you now constantly find yourself doing for your partner.

If so, congratulations. You’ve been a victim of manipulation. That’s one less human affair to experience.

Manipulation is a tricky business, and it’s just as hard to detect. Why? Because it doesn’t exactly send a rush of endorphins down your spine to realize that you have been manipulated. It’s emotionally heavy to admit that your favorite person in the whole wide world resorts to manipulation to get his or her way.

But a silver lining, if you want to see one, is that being manipulative is not synonymous to being a bad person. It only implies that your partner is romantically immature, in a way. Their understanding of relationships or how to be in one could stand to improve a few notch.

In fact, if anything, you can actually help them learn and pull them out of this destructive habit. But how would you do it if you aren’t familiar with the red flags yourself?

The good news is that you don’t have to look out for dozens of signs. Let me accentuate the top five that I believe should be sufficient in helping you detect manipulation with ease.

1. **They Avoid Confrontation**

If your partner is manipulative, chances are that they’d be uncomfortable with confrontation. But don’t make the mistake of thinking that their frustration won’t make its way to you via indirect means.

Now, these means are highly variable. You are likely to meet them in the form of the silent treatment, a consistently bad mood, a brooding stare that sucks the life out of you – or if they’re anything like my college girlfriend, it’ll be a mutual friend who will communicate the message. Something like:

*“Hey Khan, your girl is really mad at you. You need to talk to her.”*

Such an approach is wrong because instead of communicating what’s bothering her, she left the entire responsibility on me to make things right. In a way, I’m left with two options. Either I make things right, or I’m left with a sense of guilt.

Remember that relationship is ‘always’ a two-way street. It is unfair for them to expect *YOU* to fix things when they didn’t even bother communicating the issue to you directly.

You’re not out of bounds here to demand basic decency that your partner will sit you down and talk about what’s on their mind like adults.

1. **They Are Defensive**

Here’s one of the top reasons why I think it’s challenging to deal with a manipulative partner. It’s not just that *‘they’* wouldn’t confront you with what’s bothering them. They don’t want *YOU* to confront them either about their behavior.

And if you do, they’d resist your perspective and immediately seek refuge in being defensive. Maybe things are hard at work. Oh, I had a squabble with my best friend. There’s always an excuse to take your attention off the problem at hand.

Haven’t you had an episode when you tried talking to them about it, but then they got so emotional that you ended up feeling bad for bringing it up in the first place?

Do you see the pattern here? The moment you start treating them on your own terms, you find yourself sinking in a swamp of guilt.

So, if you’ve tried communicating your concerns, but there’s always something preventing the message from getting across, it is likely that you are dealing with manipulation.

1. **They Make Everything About Themselves**

So, something funny happened at work today. You have an interesting anecdote to share. But in the middle of it, your partner cuts you off and start a story of their own. Amazingly enough, it is not even remotely related to *YOUR* topic.

In other words, they’re subtle in sending the message that they are not interested in your topic. And if you want to hold the conversation, you need to hop onto theirs – because what they have to say is clearly more important.

Otherwise, you can talk for hours, and they’ll remain consumed in text messaging, or perhaps commenting LOL on a friend’s cat video on Facebook.

Another classic case of manipulation. But that’s not even the extent of it. Try doing the same with them. Feel free to share what follows, if you live to see the next day.

Point being, if your partner is manipulative, they’d try and make everything about themselves. You, my friend, will not be allowed to be the center of attention.

1. **They Always Need A Favor**

What I’ve learned from experience is that a manipulator usually asks for more favors than you would expect otherwise. Because it’s a simple tool that lets them gauge the extent to which you’re willing to execute their requests.

More often than not, they’d use the foot in the door technique. So, the first few requests they’ll make will be so tiny that you won’t even see a point in refusing. Something like, *“hey, can you make some time and proofread my resume?”*

But if you don’t draw the line, it will get to the point where they may even ask you if you can cover them for rent this month since they’re financially stumped. Don’t be surprised if their requests eventually turn into demands with a topping of *“if you really loved me…”*

Don’t get me wrong, though. I’m a staunch supporter of being there for people that you genuinely care about. Plus, occasional favors don’t count anyway.

But if it becomes a habit and appears in combination with one or more of the other red flags, you need to see it with an ounce of scepticism.

1. **They Won’t Relinquish Control**

Have you ever heard of something called a home-court advantage? If your partner is manipulative, maybe they have.

Back when I was a sophomore, one of my closest friends would always want to partake in activities that were novel to me, but not to him. He would embellish it with words like “adventure”. But the funny thing was that his entire sense of adventure would vanish in a snap if I suggested trying something that he was new to, but I wasn’t.

Simply put, a manipulator usually seeks to keep in charge. A requirement that can only be satisfied if you join them in their comfort zone. Because in yours, they’ll feel nervous, vulnerable, and will have to rely on you for guidance – all of which translates to a kiss goodbye to control.

So, if your partner consistently drags you out of your comfort zone, and into *‘their’* home court, chances are that you are being manipulated.

A word of caution, though. I don’t want you to actively go in search of these red flags. Even if you find a couple of these, take a moment before you jump to the conclusion.

Truth is, we’re all engaged in practicing one or more of these manipulations every now and then. Why? Because we’re humans. Consciously or subconsciously, we make mistakes – we misbehave at times.

So, before you intervene, you need to make sure that your conclusion is based on a large enough sample size. In other words, before you accuse them of manipulation, evaluate if your allegation is attributed to a stand-alone incident, or a habit that repeatedly waives several of these red flags.

Once you’re sure that it’s the latter, it’s recommended to act timely and hold an intervention – the ever so famous “we need to talk” moment. Remember that early detection is crucial to finding a resolution with a manipulative partner.

The deeper you are in a relationship, the harder it will be to talk about it.

The outcome of your intervention can go in one of the three ways.

1. They’ll listen to your concerns, acknowledge their fault, apologize in the moment, and put a serious effort in defeating their manipulative tendencies.
2. They’ll listen to your concerns, acknowledge their fault, apologize in the moment, but won’t put a tangible effort into improving over time.
3. They’ll get defensive, block your concerns, divert from the issue at hand, and take you on a guilt trip.

If how they respond aligns with either of the last two, I’m afraid it’s time that you walked away. Again, I’m big on fighting for a relationship. But you need to learn to pick your battles my friend!