

## How do I know if a relationship is destructive?

If it hurts or scares you, it's not love. Relationships (whether romantic, sexual, or platonic) should make the people involved feel good about themselves and about each other. If you're not sure whether or not your relationship is unhealthy, ask yourself:

- Is your happiness important to your partner/relative/friend?
- Does your partner/relative/friend make you feel bad or stupid about your ideas, thoughts, and opinions?
- Are you pressured into doing things you don't want to do?
- Is your partner/relative/friend always "just checking up" on you but it feels more like they're harassing you or like they don't trust you?
- Are you not allowed to make decisions, whether about the relationship itself or the ways in which you live your own life?
- Are you not allowed to disagree?
- Are you afraid of making them angry?
- Are you punished through silence, humiliation, force, or in other ways for not doing what your partner/relative/friend wants you to do?
- Are you nervous or scared to spend time alone with them?
- Are you not allowed to spend as much time as you want with your friends and/or family?
- Are you ever pushed, shoved, shaken, pinched, slapped, kicked, bitten, have your hair pulled, or are otherwise frightened or hurt?
- Do they ever threaten you?
- Do you feel like you don't always have a say in if, when, how, in what ways, and with whom you have sex?
- Would you be afraid to end the relationship if you wanted to?

Destructive relationships can cause a loss of self-esteem, loneliness, loss of friends, separation from family, anxiety problems in school or at work, feelings of unhappiness, depression, or fear. Physical abuse or threats can lead to serious injury, stress-related illness, or even death. If you're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, remember:

- You are not alone – there are people and resources out there who will support you every step of the way.
- It is *not* your fault.
- You do *not* deserve it.
- The abuse does not mean there's something wrong with you, your gender, or your sexual orientation.



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- It is not your responsibility to be your partner's therapist, healer, or an outlet for their abusive behavior.
- You don't have to be grateful that it "isn't worse than it is."