

MINI GUIDE



5 BAD HABITS THAT
ARE HURTING YOUR
RELATIONSHIP

BY CHARLOTTE VICTORIA

INTRODUCTION

Treating your partner right came easy in the beginning, but as you've grown increasingly comfortable together, bad habits may have crept in. Complacency can form without you noticing, eating away at the special connection you and your partner share. Take time for some honest self-evaluation as you read these five destructive behaviors and how to avoid them.

1. GOING ON THE ATTACK

Framing your partner's flaws in the strongest terms makes you more likely to win the argument, or so your reasoning goes. In reality, no-one is winning when you two are arguing. Be the bigger (wo)man and choose to de-escalate.

Remove the phrases "you always" and "you never" from your vocabulary to avoid heaping unnecessary blame on your other half. Instead, focus on the problem at hand, for example, "when you did x, it made me feel y." Resist interpreting everything your partner says in the worst way possible, and if they do say something that hits below the belt, walk away rather than firing back. Conflict is an inevitable feature of every relationship; it's how you deal with it that counts.

2. BAD MOUTHING YOUR PARTNER

Ranting about your beau or belle to your colleagues, siblings or friends is an easy habit to form. Complaining comes all too easily, while talking up your other half might make you seem aloof or overly sentimental.

The bottom line, though?

Bad mouthing your partner propagates your negative feelings towards them and gives them a bad reputation among your social circle. There's every chance your harsh words will get back to your partner one way or another. Even if they don't, your partner's bound to pick up on the negative vibes flying their way from friends and family.

Try to talk directly to your other half about issues in your relationship rather than taking your problems to the water cooler. And whomever you're talking to, don't be afraid to let them know you are your partner's biggest fan.

3. NEGLECTING YOU TIME

A healthy relationship is all about making time for each other, right? Well, actually, that's just half the picture. Equally as important is spending time on yourself: exploring your interests, developing a skill, meeting new people.

When you and your partner first met, there was so much to discover about each other. But when you stop growing as a person it's easy for your partner to feel they know all there is to know about you. Mystery turns to monotony and the next thing you know you're in a dangerous relationship rut.

Avoid allowing your relationship to become all you are. Pursue your own hobbies, challenge yourself, and put yourself in new situations. Taking time to grow as a person will give your relationship room to grow, too.

4. REVISITING OLD WRONGS

Your relationship used to be a haven where you and your partner felt free from judgment, safe and accepted. Now you carefully cling to each other's mistakes--the times he hurt you, the times she slipped up--ready to whip them out should you need to prove a point or win a fight.

But it's never too late to leave the past behind. When your partner wrongs you in some way, raise the problem immediately, talk it through, decide how you'll both act going forward, and then move on. Forgiving and forgetting will free your partner from living in regret and free you from ongoing resentment.

5. NO LONGER SURPRISING YOUR PARTNER

Work got busy. You had children. A family member got sick. There are countless reasons why you might have stopped surprising your partner, but excuses aren't what's important here.

Surprises show your partner you were thinking of them even when you weren't together and that you don't take them for granted. Pick her up a bunch of flowers, buy him a gift for no particular occasion, take her on a spontaneous picnic, or get him tickets to his favorite band. Going all out will show your partner you're all in.

CONCLUSION

Do any of the habits above ring true for you? The good news is, relationships are all about learning and growing, and it's never too late to change your ways. You'll be surprised how quickly things with your partner go from bad to good or good to great as you take a pro-active approach to improving your relationship.



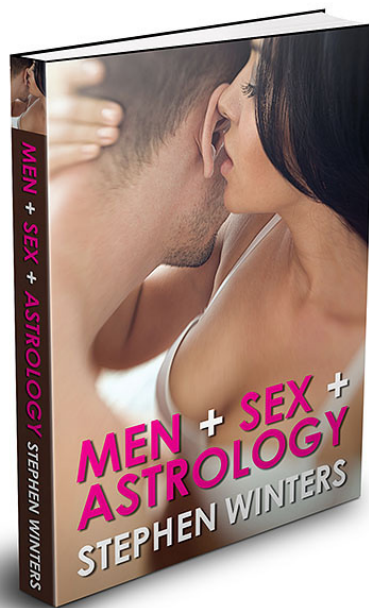
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