

How to tell if your abusive partner is changing

Adapted from [Women Against Domestic Violence](#)

He takes responsibility for his behaviour

- He acknowledges and accepts responsibility for what he's done, fully acknowledges that he used abuse to control you and that it was wrong
- He doesn't blame you, other people, his stress, his job, or any other outside circumstances for his behaviour
- He is no longer denies his behaviour, makes light of it, or makes excuses for it
- He acknowledges that he chose to behave this way instead of saying that other people made him do it, or that he can't control himself
- He fully understands and acknowledges that what he did was wrong
- He admits lies, he admits what he's done and is not longer making up stories to make himself look better
- He no longer tries to hide his behaviour from others
- He understands that recovery from abusiveness takes a long time and he'll have to work at it for a long, long time

He understand the effects of his behaviour

- He understands what his behaviour has cost you
- He understands fully that you and your children have been hurt by what he's done, and the ways in which you've been hurt
- He will talk with you in depth (if you want to) about how you feel, your fear, your hurt, your anger, your rights, your lack of trust for him and understands fully that it is his behaviour that has caused it
- He is sorry for what he's done, and is working hard to overcome the damage he's done and is actively making up for it by giving you back what is rightfully yours - money, rights, freedoms, choices, etc.
- He understands that it will take his victims a long time to recover from what he's done to them

He respects you

- He is proving to you that he understands that you're a human being with rights and is no longer trying to take them away from you - no more double standards
- He understands that you're an equal human being, and he's not superior to you
- He's pulling his weight
- He respects your opinions, even the ones he disagrees with
- He accepts your right to be angry with him for what he's done
- He respects your right to independence and your right to freedom

- He changes his behaviour
- He is no longer violent in any way
- He is making a big effort to be non abusive
- He does not pressure you, intimidate or threaten you
- He is no longer blocking communication - he listens and respects what you have to say
- He will discuss with you the controlling behaviours and attitudes he's had
- You can speak and act freely without him retaliating
- If he tries to control you, you can point it out to him and he'll stop
- When you express anger at him, he listens instead of getting angry and trying to shout you down, threatening you or trying to convince you that something's wrong with you for feeling that way
- He stops interfering in your friendships and family relationships and you are able to re-establish and repair these, and make new friends
- He stops monitoring your movements, demanding to know where you are and who's there
- He stops expecting sex on demand
- He's stopped drinking
- He's fair with money, allowing you to have your assets in your name, a job if you want
- He takes responsibility for what he does and how it affects you and the children
- He no longer treats you like a servant

How to tell he's not changing

- He continues to be violent in any way
- He threatens and tries to intimidate you. This will often include threats to attack family and friends, threats to kill you or "put out a contract on you." Threats that he will take the children away or get custody of them himself, or threats to kill himself
- He badmouths you to the children / others
- He says "I can't change unless you do" This means that he's trying to get you to agree to give up your rights and freedoms in exchange for him not abusing you
- He tries to get sympathy from you, family members, and friends
- He is still lying to you, the children, your family or other people about what he's done
- He won't acknowledge that it was wrong. He doesn't seem sorry that he did it, he only seems sorry that he has suffered some consequences for it
- He refuses to let the subject of his abuse come up or gets angry when it does. He won't discuss his controlling behaviours and attitudes.
- He still tries to deny it, minimize it, excuse it, or justify it
- He plays victim. He says "How could you do this to me.?" He still whines and blames you for all the problems
- He is overly charming, always trying to remind you of all the good times you had together and ignore the bad. He tries to buy you back with romantic gifts, dinners, flowers. All while trying to convince you that you need to stay together to work it out
- He will not get help or says he'll get counselling or other help, but never does

- He does get help and then tries to convince you that he's cured and you need to take him back now
- He might suddenly claim to have found God; he goes to church a few times
- He cries and begs, particularly in a public situation so that you are embarrassed and appear to be "cold hearted"
- He does things to try to sabotage your efforts to make it on your own
- He harasses or stalks you. If you ask him for space or time, he refuses to allow you to have any and continues to make contact in any way he can. Harassment by phone calls, threats, legal frustrations, showing up at work, hanging around family.
- He continues to restrict your rights. He still behaves as if he's superior. You aren't able to express yourself and speak freely
- He still demands constant attention, won't allow you to take care of your own needs
- He still picks at you and criticizes you, and ignores your strengths and contributions to the relationship
- He doesn't support your independence, still refuses to acknowledge that you have rights
- He puts his wants and needs above yours
- He doesn't recognize the damage he's done. He gets angry with you over the consequences you've suffered over his abuse
- He's mad or seems confused as to why you fear him, don't trust him, are hurt, and angry
- He tries to get out of the consequences by trying to convince you that something's wrong with you
- He's mad that you left, instead of recognizing your right to have done so
- He still acts like you owe him
- He's impatient or critical with you for not forgiving him immediately, for not being satisfied with the changes he may have already made, especially if he hasn't made the changes you requested, or hasn't changed but claims he has
- He's only concerned with how hard the situation is for him, and no one else. He feels sorry for himself
- He doesn't show appropriate concern for how you and the children feel about what he's done. Abuse does more than just hurt, it is damaging, and if he doesn't show appropriate concern for the damage he's done, then he hasn't changed
- He says he can only change if you help him, he wants emotional support and forgiveness
- He says "I'm changing" but you can see that he's not. He gets angry with you for not realizing how much he's changed. He gets angry for not trusting that he's changed for good. Abusive men often say I'm sorry then get mad if you don't immediately forget what they did, he thinks his sorry resolves the matter and it should be dropped and you should just move forward
- He pressures you into taking him back

For more information call the Respect Phonenumber on Freephone 0808 802 4040
Monday – Friday 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm, email info@respectphonenumber.org.uk