

Top Ten Relationship Poisons

We invite you to explore 10 categories of the most common and harmful relationship poisons (in no particular order). Within each of the ten categories, you will find a variety of ways the poisons may appear. Anytime you express one of these poisons, although you may get some temporary "benefit," you never get the kind of love and relationship you *really* want.

We like to see these poisons as **strategies** to get our needs met. While your needs themselves are completely valid (such as independence, love, connection, affection, fun, etc.), sometimes the strategies we humans use to meet these needs are not the healthiest. For example, someone who has a need for more connection could:

(strategy #1) blame and criticize their partner for spending so much time working

(strategy #2) appreciate their partner for how hard they work and have a positive brainstorm about fun new ways to make sharing time together as enjoyable as possible

As you can see from the above example, it is the same underlying **need** (for more connection) but two very different **strategies**. Strategy #1 includes poisons and would likely result in the blamed partner creating even more distance. Strategy #2 is a much more effective path to cultivating greater closeness.

We encourage you to read through all the poisons and acknowledge any that you (not your partner) have a pattern of doing. The first step in relationship growth is to take 100% responsibility for any and all ways you have been negatively contributing to disconnect and challenges.

We wholeheartedly believe that taking 100% responsibility = 100% freedom in our lives and opens the greatest opportunities for inner wisdom, solutions, and creating the life we really want!

Again, this is not about judging or blaming your beloved *or* yourself. Instead, it's about getting compassionately curious about what strategies you've been using that haven't been working optimally. Once we realize what isn't working, we create the space for what more is possible!



1- Blame and Criticism

- punishing your partner
- blame
- judging
- pointing out everything your partner does "wrong"
- criticism
- staying in victim role
- shaming your partner and trying to make them feel badly

2- Contempt

- name calling
- looking down on your partner
- ridicule and teasing
- expressing a mix of disgust and anger
- eye rolling
- mimicking your partner

3- Controlling and Dominating

- talking excessively or loudly to speak over your partner
- manipulating
- nagging
- physical aggression or violence
- psychoanalyzing my partner
- coercing or pressuring your partner to do something they don't want to
- gaslighting
- valuing your ideas as more valid than your partner's because of your background



4- Checking Out (physically, mentally, or emotionally)

- giving the silent treatment
- stonewalling (a refusal to communicate or cooperate)
- withdrawing
- shutting down
- using tiredness as an excuse to check out
- going to friends or family to complain, rather than your beloved, to find solutions

5- Defensiveness

- thinking you know it all
- having to be right
- unwillingness to change
- being stubborn
- closed body posture when your partner speaks
- defensiveness
- arguing or problem solving when highly triggered
- invalidating other person's feelings or thoughts
- resistance or unwillingness to take responsibility or give an apology

6- Resentment

- using the past as "weapons"
- unwillingness to forgive
- continually reminding your beloved of their past mistakes, despite their positive changes

7- Secrets and Dishonesty

- being in denial, not being honest with yourself
- pretending everything is okay
- secrets
- affairs (emotional and/or physical)
- holding feelings in
- hiding
- creating drama to get attention
- giving in when you don't mean it
- threatening to leave, even when you don't mean it

8- Believing Everything You Think

Most people are upset because of the story they have about why their partner did or didn't do something, and this story is often entirely or partially inaccurate.

- taking things personally
- overthinking
- projection (ex: accusing your partner for something *you* do)
- exaggerating problems to self
- idealizing past lovers
- addiction to drama (oftentimes unconsciously)

9- Neglecting the Relationship

- not making each other a priority
- lack of physical affection
- thinking to yourself: "I'll take care of myself, and you take care of yourself."
- keeping score of who does more
- ignoring your partner
- not following through

10- Not Loving and Caring for Yourself

- neglecting self-care
- addictions or other destructive behaviors
- not managing stress and anxiety
- getting clingy; not giving your partner space
- not tending to your health
- isolating from people outside your relationship
- expecting your partner to meet all your needs
- jealousy
- self-judgment
- unresolved wounds from the past
- becoming overly passive so you lose yourself and your voice