

Choosing Healthy Relationships

Learning to protect yourself from negative and destructive personalities is one of the most powerful and important lessons in life.

How to recognise these people?

- ☹ They are arrogant and very self confident. They think they are better than you.
- ☹ They verbally put you down, telling you 'you are no good', 'you are stupid' or 'you are a loser'. This is hurtful to your spirit and causes you to doubt yourself.
- ☹ They simply get away with it, if you don't stand up and do something about it.
- ☹ They act as if nothing happened, telling you things like 'I don't know what you're talking about' or 'If you had done what you were supposed to do it would not have happened'. They always place the blame on you and take no responsibility themselves.
- ☹ They are jealous and possessive. They often become hostile at the thought of losing you, because they see you as their property.
- ☹ They dominate and emotionally control. They expect your complete attention and support and demand your obedience at all times.
- ☹ They can't understand their own problem and they are unaware of how it affects others. They are the last people to admit they have a problem.
- ☹ They know how to manipulate you to make you feel guilty. This makes you think you are the cause of the problem.
- ☹ They stalk you. This is a way to maintain control over you.

How do these people affect your health?

Being around someone with these destructive behaviours can eventually destroy your health. They kill your spirit and enjoyment of life and you feel depressed and sad.

You may experience:

- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Low Self-Esteem
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Chronic illness
- ❖ Guilt
- ❖ Anger
- ❖ Loneliness
- ❖ Weight changes
- ❖ Nightmares
- ❖ Insomnia
- ❖ Emotional problems

How to regain your health, power and spirit

Start by allowing yourself to feel your real feelings. The sadness, anger and regret are all natural and normal when you have been dealing with destructive personalities. Give yourself time to heal both emotionally and physically.

See the healing time as an opportunity to get back to good eating and exercising again. It's not uncommon for such stressful times to play havoc with your hormones.



An Australian Government Initiative

Look for inexpensive ways to support your adrenal system, which becomes very depleted when you have fear, anger, sadness and stress in your life for long periods of time. Early nights and lots of rest can help greatly when you are really rundown.

Part of your healing will be to try to understand and express your feelings. Find a counsellor or support group and talk to others who have experienced the same things as you.

Taking up new hobbies such as bush walking, yoga or dancing will help you to gain space and reconnect to your inner self. If you feel your confidence has been squashed, challenge yourself with a new activity that allows you to extend yourself. This will help you re-establish new limits and re-discover that you can do much more than you had previously thought.

Learn by listening to your body. If you need to rest, then learn to do that. You will discover that the human body is strong and able to bounce back when given what it needs to thrive again.

Take a few minutes in each day to do something you enjoy and remember to thank yourself for making the important changes you have making.

Express your feelings through writing or through art or crafts. Use what you have written when you talk to your counsellor. By writing your feelings down or expressing them in your art, this can really help you to heal. Likewise learning something new can help you to laugh again and find your inner creativity.

Destructive people feed off your emotional reactions. As you find yourself becoming stronger, practice using humour and show no fear when this person tries to scare you. You will find they will be less inclined to continue to pursue you because they are not getting the reaction they are after.

Why do you keep attracting destructive people?

If you are the type of person that goes from one abusive, controlling relationship to another, then find out why. Think about why you are initially attracted to abusers (or perhaps how you are attracting them) and stop going out with them. Refuse to stay in a heartless destructive relationship even if you have fears of being by yourself.

Living in fear can be debilitating and far too many relationships are based on fear rather than love. Abusers know the power that fear has and can often use this power to prevent someone from leaving them. It's impossible to have a good relationship if you stay in it out of fear. Don't believe the lies that 'no one else will love you' or 'you'll be sorry if you leave me' or that something is wrong with you.

You deserve to live surrounded by loving people who respect and love you for who you are, not for who they want to make you into.

Identify all the strong, positive, loving people around you, as they are your support network. Turn towards them for guidance and let them help you achieve freedom.

Remember you have the right not to be a 'victim' for the rest of your life. Things change when you change – so move forward and start living the life you want to live.

Adapted from an article by Narelle Stegehuis in Living Now. Narelle is a Naturopath specialising in women's hormonal imbalances.

