**Here’s What *Healthy* and *Abusive* Relationships Look Like**

Sometimes abusive relationships are easy to identify; other times the abuse may take subtle forms. In general, abusive relationships have a serious power imbalance, with the abuser controlling or attempting to control most aspects of life. Healthy relationships share responsibility and decision **–**making tasks and reflect respect for all the people in the relationship, including children.

***Abusive Relationships:***

**Using Intimidation**

* Making partner afraid by using looks, actions, and gestures.
* Smashing or destroying things.
* Destroying or confiscating partner’s property.
* Abusing pets as a display of power and control.
* Silent or overt raging.
* Displaying weapons or threatening their use.
* Making physical threats.

**Using Emotional Abuse**

* Putting partner down.
* Making partner feel bad about himself / herself.
* Calling partner names.
* Playing mind games.
* Interrogating partner

⬩ “Checking up on” partner’s activities or whereabouts.

⬩ Humiliating partner, weather through direct attacks or “jokes”.

* Making partner feel guilty.
* Shaming partner.

**Using Isolation**

* Controlling what partner does, who he / she sees and talks to, what he or she reads, where he or she goes.
* Limiting partner’s outside involvement.
* Demanding partner remains home when not with them.
* Cutting partner off from prior friends, activities, and social interaction.
* Using jealousy to justify your actions.

(Jealousy is the ***primary*** symptom of abusive relationships; it is also a core component of Love Addiction)

**Minimizing, Denying and Blame Shifting**

* Making light of the abuse and not taking partner’s concerns about it seriously.
* Saying the abuse did not happen, or wasn’t that bad.
* Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior to partner. (i.e., “I did it because you-.”)
* Saying partner caused it.

**Using Children**

* Making partner feel guilty about the children.
* Using the children to relay messages.
* Using visitation to harass partner.
* Threatening to take the children away.

**Using Male Privilege**

* Treating partner like a servant.
* Making all the decisions.
* Acting like the “master of the castle.”
* Being the one to define men’s and women’s or the relationship’s roles.

**Using Economic Abuse**

* Preventing partner from getting or keeping a job.
* Giving partner an allowance.
* Taking partner’s money.
* Not letting partner know about or have access to family income.

***Healthy Relationships:***

**Non- Threatening Behavior**

* Talking and acting so that partner feels safe and comfortable doing and saying things.

**Respect**

* Listing to partner non-judgmentally
* Being emotionally affirming and understanding.
* Valuing opinions.

**Trust and Support**

* Supporting partner’s goals in life
* Respecting partner’s right to his or her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.

**Honesty and Accountability**

* Accepting responsibility for self.
* Acknowledging past use of violence and/ or emotionally abusive behavior, changing the behavior.
* Acknowledging betrayal, changing the behavior.
* Admitting being wrong when it is appropriate.
* Communicating openly and truthfully, acknowledging past abuse, and seeking help for abusive relationship patterns.

**Responsible Parenting**

* Sharing parental responsibilities.
* Being a positive, non-violent role model for children.

**Shared Responsibility**

* Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work.
* Making family decisions together.