

**SOME QUESTIONS THAT A PARTNER MAY BE THINKING ABOUT OR ASKING
YOU TO THINK ABOUT AND ANSWER IF YOU HAVE BEEN CONTROLLING,
DISRESPECTFUL, AND ABUSIVE WITH THEM**

- **Do you believe that everyone takes their life stress out on their partners when they get home and do you think that this is okay for you to do to me?**

- **Do you think you have the right to take your stress and your anger out on me because I am your partner? Do you expect me to feel okay about this treatment or to feel close to you after you have done this to me?**

- **Do you recognize that you have been controlling and disrespectful to me in our relationship together? Do you acknowledge that you have been emotionally and verbally abusive with me? If so, why have you used your words and actions to hurt me? Do you even notice how hurt, sad, intimidated, and fearful I have felt when you have done this to me in the past?**

- **Do you acknowledge that emotional and verbal abuse comes in many forms including subtle belittling comments, sarcasm, and verbal “jabs” in front of others as well as yelling and screaming at me, swearing and cursing at me, and becoming intimidating and overpowering with me? Are you aware that others in our life have probably noticed how you have put me down in social situations?**

- **Do you even believe that you are doing anything wrong when you are hurtful and abusive with me. If you really do believe this is wrong, why would you go ahead and do it anyway?**

- **Are you willing to look at and openly and honestly admit how much hurt, fear, and pain you have caused me to experience in our relationship together?**

- **Have you also been disrespectful, shaming, intimidating, and controlling with our children? Do you think it is alright to do this to them? Do you ever think about how your behavior may affect them and the relationships they have with other people in the future?**

- **Do you think it is alright to put out a “happy-go-lucky” and positive “public image” and then go ahead and treat the people close to you badly when you are at home? Do you act differently at work and then come home and become hurtful and disrespectful with me? How do you think our family and friends would react if they found out about your controlling, disrespectful, and abusive behavior with me?**

- **Do you make the choice to treat me better when others are around so no one else knows how you really treat me “behind closed doors?” If so, are you only concerned about “getting caught” or having others know what you are actually doing with me?**

- **What inner thoughts guide your behavior when no one is around us? Do these thoughts “set the stage” for you to treat me in hurtful and disrespectful ways?**

- **Do you believe that you are “better than” me and other people? Do you think you are “above” anyone else’s criticism or feedback to you about who you are and what you are doing?**

- Do you avoid taking responsibility for your behaviors by blaming me or others for what you say and do (e.g. *“You shouldn’t have used the tone of voice with me”*)? Do you exaggerate my role in causing your disrespectful and abusive anger by trying to say that I’m the “real reason” that you get so angry so often? Do you make excuses or try to justify your hurtful behavior with me (i.e. telling me you were ‘stressed out’ from work or ‘just drank a little too much’)? Do you deny (i.e. saying *“it didn’t happen”* or *“I never did that”*) and minimize (i.e. *“you’re just ‘too sensitive’”*) the disrespectful things that you have said or done to me in the past?
- Have you done irresponsible and immature actions and been dishonest with me at times about doing them (e.g. drinking too much, flirting with others to hurt me and make me feel insecure, throwing “temper tantrums,” or spending money compulsively) and then gotten disrespectful and abusive with me when I have confronted you about these behaviors?
- Have you tried to use manipulative behavior with me? Have you tried to get me to feel sorry for you, to blame myself for how you are feeling and what you have done to me, to confuse me or lie to me in order to create a “false reality” about what is actually going on between the two of us?
- Do you treat me poorly and then expect the “good times” that we have had together to make the “bad” all go away? Why should anyone “forget” that they have been treated badly when, in reality, if you do nothing to change, I will need to protect myself emotionally, and sometimes even physically, from this same kind of treatment in the future?
- Do you even care about whether I trust you when you have lied to me and not followed through with commitments that you have made to me in the past?
- Can you allow me to be angry with you for the disrespectful way that you have been treating me, for as long as I need to be angry with you, and can you understand that I will have my own process for moving through the emotional pain that I am experiencing right now and have experienced in the past (if I do decide to stay with you) even if it doesn’t jibe with what you think I should be doing or how long you think it should take for me to move past that pain?
- Do you expect me to praise you for behaving more respectfully in the present when you should have been treating me this way all along in our time together?
- Do you expect that I should just “put up with” your controlling and abusive attitudes and behaviors rather than confronting you about what you are doing and saying and then actually thinking about my options and how I want to respond as I move forward with my life?
- Do you think you are “entitled” to physical or emotional intimacy from a partner whenever you want it just because you happen to want it at the time? Do you think you should get attention, affection, sex, and love from me no matter what you say or do to me?
- Are you unable, or just unwilling, to change how you view and treat me in our relationship together?
- Can you give me the “personal space” in our relationship to be who I really am and who I want to be as a person?

- **Do you believe that I should just “put up with” your controlling and abusive behavior rather than questioning it or looking at my other options?**
- **Can you trust that I am a competent and capable adult when I am not around you or when I do things that you do not like or agree with?**
- **Do you really care enough about me to actually do something to change your disrespectful, controlling, and abusive behavior with me? If so, what are you willing to do, how will you do it, and when will you do it?**
- **If you don’t really care about me and how you treat me, do you realize that I am perfectly capable of living a happy and fulfilling life without you and that I can make the decision to leave you and do that for myself at any point in my life?**