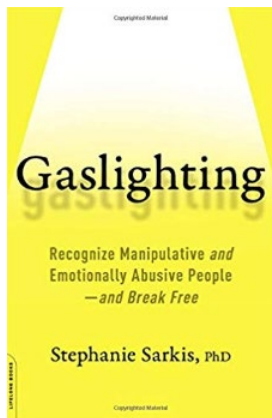


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From *Gaslighting: Recognize Manipulative and Emotionally Abusive People and Break Free* www.stephaniesarkis.com

What makes a relationship healthy?

In a healthy relationship, you feel free to be yourself. Each partner takes responsibility for their behaviors. You feel comfortable stating your needs, and there is mutual love, trust, and respect. Partners are interdependent – they are healthy and fulfilled together and are also healthy and fulfilled in their lives outside of the relationship. Partners may disagree on some things, but they can have a mature conversation about their differences. Healthy partners know their mates' vulnerabilities and are respectful of them. In a healthy relationship, partners are *actors* rather than *reactors*. They look first at themselves to see if they are behaving in a way that aligns with their values and beliefs. If their behavior does not align with who they want to be, they make a clear and appropriate apology to their partner. Healthy partners also make time to have fun together.

What are some red flags in a relationship?

- Anger management issues
- Blames other people for their behavior
- General negative attitude about others
- Pitting you against other people – “triangulating”
- Sees people as either wonderful or terrible – “splitting”
- Turns on the charm when you leave – “hoovering”
- Pressuring you for a commitment early in the relationship – “love-bombing”
- Guilts and shames you when you state your needs
- Has a history of dysfunctional relationships
- Refuses to get help for their issues

What helps us find healthier relationships?

- Talking through family-of-origin and relationship issues with a mental health professional
- Learning attachment style – secure, anxious, avoidant, disorganized
- Discovering ways to increase self-esteem
- Connecting with a healthy support system
- Receiving appropriate treatment for medical issues such as ADHD
- Having a sense of connectedness and purpose
- Defining and enforcing healthy boundaries
- Practicing pro-active self-care

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