



## ABUSIVE & CONTROLLING RELATIONSHIPS

Do you feel trapped in a relationship that is draining your energy and no matter how hard you try you're not able to escape or to end it? Would you describe your partner as "protective", "jealous" or "possessive?"

Hi! I welcome you to my podcast series. My name is Anu and I am a writer, an educator and an abusive relationship survivor. In today's podcast, I will be talking about toxic relationships which involve control and abuse. I will dig deeper to understand what drives abusers to abuse and I will share my own experiences and teachings with you.

According to The Guardian, Domestic abuse killings have 'more than doubled' during the Covid-19 lockdown in the UK. And in the US, according to The National Domestic Violence Hotline, an average of 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence and stalking, by an intimate partner.

Ok so let's start with what leads to abusers committing such unlawful acts. The first and most common reason as to what may lead an abuser to abuse is learned behavior from parents or relatives. Such abusers, in their childhood, may have come across instances where they had seen others being abused. It could be one parent abusing the other or their siblings being abused by a relative or a family friend. And so, from their exposure to such an event, they completely understand the terror of being the helpless victim. This then gets registered in their subconscious mind and if you give them a choice of either being the helpless victim, or the in-control abuser, some grow up to prefer the role of the abuser. This desire is what fuels this malicious act.

The second reason as to why a person would abuse is that they could be having mental health or personality disorder issues. It could be anger management, or an intermittent explosive disorder, or even a drinking or a drug problem, that destroys their ability to become aware of themselves. People with such disorders are often known to get out of control during arguments or to even harm or hit their partners in the worst way. I was subject to abuse by previous partners and this abuse was commonly associated when the abuser was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. These substances only brought out the worse in the perpetrator, which led to further arguments and violence.

In today's world, you will also come across people who have an anti-social personality disorder who are commonly referred to as psychopaths or sadistic. They gain pleasure from seeing others in pain and in some cases, they get the most pleasure when they are actually the ones who are creating the pain. These individuals abuse others for pleasure.

The third reason as to why somebody would abuse is that they themselves were actually abused - it could have been in their childhood or even as an adult. This experience creates an empathy deficit in their subconscious mind if they do not seek help. There is a high probability that these abusers weren't able to develop any empathic abilities during their childhood development. They then end up taking other people's lives for granted and treat their partner as a trophy or an object exclusively for themselves.

There is also a possibility that a child who was abused by a pedophile who was of the same gender, actually grows up and abuses the opposite sex, to simply prove that they are not homosexual. This becomes a subconscious effort to resolve their own abuse.

Now let's move on to talk more about the consequences of abuse when the abuser enters into a relationship. An abusive relationship is one where there's conflict, disrespect, and where one will always seek to undermine the other. Yes, no doubt every relationship has its own set of ups and downs but these kinds of relationships are consistently unpleasant. The number of negative moments outweighs the number of positive ones.

The worst experience for me was when I ended up in a relationship with a man who had narcissistic personal disorder. He was drawn to me as he saw my empathy as being vulnerable and easy to manipulate. I got sucked into his many lies about his made-up business and so when he asked me to lend him some money, I had no doubt that he would pay me back...until he never did. As time went by, financial abuse was followed by verbal abuse. There were more arguments, violent threats and disgust. Even if I just opened up to him about how I felt and the fact that he still owed me, he was outraged. He would insult me and then apologize and reassure me that the money was coming from one of his clients to pay me back. Sorry had become just an empty word. There were many times I felt I was sacrificing my freedom and my life by going back to him. It seemed as if I were trapped in a vicious cycle from which I couldn't escape, but he had control over me and I felt very insecure. It took me a while to actually pack my bags and to leave him. Justice was served when I eventually won a county court judgement against him and he was made to pay me back. It wasn't an easy journey however it is one which made me the woman that I am today.

Gender plays a vital role in personal control and abuse within relationships. But, not just with women, even men too become victims of abuse. In the beginning, it is usually a fairy-tale and it may be hard to identify the abuser. The abuse creates damage physically and mentally. It eats its way into your mental health, confidence, and even into your identity and that is why the victim becomes unaware of when to walk away. This is why it took me longer than it should have to walk away.

But some behavioral signs and stages can help you to recognize an abuser such as, if a partner talks negatively and tries to put you down often, the abuser normally tries to embarrass and control the victim and one of their classic moves is to separate the victim from their family and friends and even from their job.

Now lets move on to 'control' in a relationship. The reason why I feel so strongly about this topic is because I for one know how damaging a controlling relationship can be. I found myself in one controlling relationship after another to the point that I then also became a controller as a result of the learned patterns which I experienced during each relationship.

A partner being jealous of you having your own passions or interests and then being offended that you are choosing your passions over them? That's control. I was made to feel bad if I went off to do my own thing with my friends and then I would feel obliged to 'make it up' to him. This control was damaging as I was slowly neglecting who I was as a person and focussing on becoming the partner whom he wanted me to be. It is no wonder that this relationship didn't work out. I felt depressed in the end as I was not able to pursue my own desires or passions.

A controlling relationship is emotional manipulation of a partner through a set of actions or behavior that forces their partner (the one who is actually being controlled) to believe that they themselves are the culprit or the villain in their relationship, or that they are super lucky that their controlling partner is "putting up" with them. To put it in simple terms, a controlling relationship is where an individual dominates and intimidates their partner, mostly through emotional and sometimes even through physical abuse.

The root cause as to why a person becomes controlling is usually due to a sense of fear and insecurity. If a person does not feel secure or safe, this creates a need to control everything and everybody around us. Another example of control would be if your partner goes through your phone to see what you have been up to. There is a high probability that the controlling partner is the one who is actually scared of losing the one that they love, which sounds romantic and sweet, though this comes with consequences I'm afraid and it's not healthy in the long run. Controlling behaviour results from one's childhood; if they were neglected as a child, or maybe the controllers parents were too strict or controlling.

If you are experiencing or have experienced a controlling or an abusive partner, you already know that it's not a healthy situation to be in. The amount of insults, criticism, belittling, and accusations one may encounter, can be frightening and wounding. This creates painful mental scars that stay for life. Without knowing, this abuse slowly eats away at the victim's confidence, self-esteem, and sense of self-worth. The victim thinks that they are good for nothing and thus tend to cling on to their controlling-abusive partner.

It could be hard to identify a controlling relationship but the control often begins by checking the partner's mobile phone, examining phone bills, managing all finances, and ensuring their partner seeks permission to even buy things. Eventually, this can escalate into wanting to know

where their partner is at all times. This goes on until the abuser takes away the victim's freedom and independence and then they are in total control

Experiment for yourself. Make an impromptu plan to meet your friends or visit any social gathering with your loved ones. Your partner would then reach out to you or leave a text message. Simply text them back saying "I am busy and can't speak/text right now. Can we talk later?" Look out for their response. A controlling response will result in your partner being upset and they may throw tantrums when you speak later. Whilst a caring and loving partner will respect your time with your friends and wish you a great time.

If you find that you receive a negative response from your partner, try this out a few more times. Learn and understand the behavior of your partner as this repetitive destructive cycle needs to be broken. In most cases, the controlling behavior is fixable if the person is willing to accept it and to work on themselves. Suggest seeking professional help. Therapy will enable your partner to talk about why they feel the need to be in control, about what they are afraid of and what need is not being met? Your partner would need to learn to let go of the past so as to stop feeling so anxious in the present.

Self-awareness is the one change which you need in order to bring light back into your life. You need to realize that it is not your fault that your partner behaves this way and that you are worth so much more, you do not deserve to be treated this way. You do not have to feel guilty and you should find ways to make yourself feel 'you' again. Try reconnecting with your family and friends. Seek out for help, talk to somebody. If you decide to break up and/or move out then make sure the abuser is not able to reconnect with you because their behavior could be much worse than it was before.

There are various counseling, medical, self-help resources, and helpline services available across the globe where people are able to help both yourself and the abuser should they wish to receive help.

You may also opt for my 12-week self-development plan which is absolutely FREE. I will add the link in the description below for you. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions. Don't forget to also like this podcast and to tag or share it with somebody who may need help or who may be going through a similar situation, and please share your thoughts in the comments section below.

Also check out my book 'Victim2Victor' where I share my experiences of childhood abuse, how the abuse shaped me as a person, and how I broke free to gain the freedom and happiness that I thought I would never find. I share my journey of evolution through travel, self-help, and a determination to cast off my damaging past. It is my humble attempt to reach out to fellow survivors of abuse and to impact the lives of those who feel helpless. I am sure it will help others to find themselves, just as I did. You can find out more information about me on my website: [victim2victor.net](http://victim2victor.net) and my book is available from Amazon.

Thank you for listening, I will see you soon. Until then, stay safe my friends.

