

## **ELIMINATING TOXIC INFLUENCES**

Certain people and situations in life can trigger us to feel badly about ourselves or engage in destructive behaviors. Identifying the toxic influences in our lives and taking steps to create boundaries or a new life without them can improve mental and physical health over time.

## **FAST FACTS**

- An average of 80% of Americans have experienced emotional abuse. [1]
- Approximately ¾ of U.S. employees have, or have had a toxic boss according to a 2018 survey from Monster.com [2]
- Toxic friends are common. 84% of women and 75% of men report having a toxic friend at some point. [3]

## TRAITS OF TOXIC PEOPLE



**Manipulation**. Toxic people are often very good at manipulation. They may seem to be genuinely interested in your company and getting to know you at first, but will eventually use the knowledge they gain about you to try and get you to do what they want. They will often twist your words or make you feel guilty to get their way.



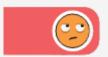
They make you feel bad about yourself. Insults are the most direct way that toxic people can make you feel bad, but most of the time the ways they affect your self-esteem are more subtle. When you are feeling happy or proud of yourself, they will find ways to "rain on your parade" or downplay your achievements. They might also act like they are smarter than you to make you feel dumb or insignificant.



**Being judgmental.** Everyone can be judgmental from time to time, but a toxic person is judgmental almost all of the time. They see things in black and white and criticize anything that they don't agree with or approve of, instead of considering the circumstances or the feelings of other people.

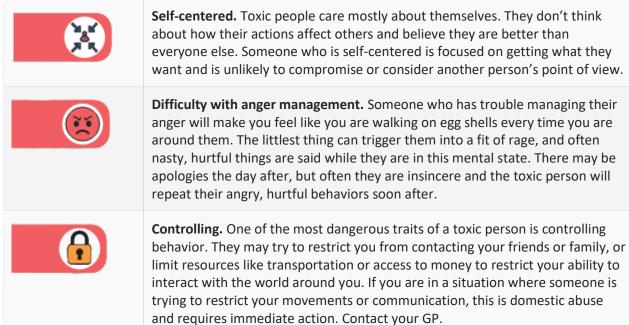


**Negativity.** Some people just can't seem to see the good in life. They will find something bad about everything and aren't able to find joy in anything. Being around someone like this can make it hard for you enjoy yourself and be positive. Sometimes it can be easy to confuse the symptoms of depression for negativity, so it is worth having a conversation with someone to determine if they need help getting through depression or if they are truly being toxic.



**Passive aggression.** These behaviors are a way that people express their discontent without having a conversation about their problems. This type of hostility is less obvious than anger and can be shown in a number of different ways. Some forms of passive aggression include snide comments, sabotaging the efforts of other people, and purposefully doing something or not doing something to make things inconvenient for someone or get them upset.





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