

Ten Things You Can Do To Screw Up A Romantic Relationship

1. Take your partner for granted. Get used to them. Remind yourself that they love you and will forgive you so you don't have to put them first. Early on in your relationship, you may have treated your partner like a king or a queen, basked on their every word, sent them cards, bought them flowers, left notes on their car and on their answering machine letting them know that you were really interested in them. You probably arrived on time for dates and didn't forget when you had plans. If they did something nice for you, you probably noticed and said, "Thank you." You knew that you were under scrutiny, that they hadn't decided if you were a keeper yet, so you were on your best behavior. But hey, now that you trust that they love you, relax a little. It's exhausting to put out all that effort to treat them respectfully. Now it's time to focus on your other interests. And if they get cranky, you can always say, "I'm sorry." Even better, you can accuse them of being unreasonable, jealous and controlling. If you want to take it to that next step, convince yourself that your partner is the cause of your unhappiness and make them pay for this.
2. Take out your anger on your partner. If you have a bad day at work or get stuck in traffic on the way home, yell at your partner. They'll probably let you get away with it, and after you yell, you'll probably feel better.
3. Criticize your partner frequently and venomously. If it bothers you that your partner is five pounds overweight, point it out, sarcastically. Perhaps you could say something like, "Those pants would look really good on you if you lost about five pounds." If you are annoyed that your partner does not cook as well as you, find a way to rub it in. You might, for example, comment, "Hmmm, this is an interesting way to sauté mushrooms. I never thought of trying for a rubbery texture." Whatever you do, don't look in the mirror and ask yourself why your partner's weight or cooking techniques are a problem for you.
4. Take everything your partner says personally. If your partner is in a bad mood, or they are critical of you, magnify the significance of the action or comment. It's best if you say nothing and mope. Sooner or later your partner will apologize. And if they don't, personalize that as well. Remind yourself that everything your partner says or does, or doesn't say or doesn't do, is about you.
5. Don't set boundaries. Don't worry about the distinction of where you end and your partner begins. If they are sad, remember that it is your job to "fix" it. If they are angry, assume that it is your fault, and do your best to "fix" it. If they are happy, you can be happy, too. If you are annoyed or hurt by something your partner does, don't say anything about it or ask them to change their

behavior. If you don't like the way that your partner is treating you, just silently put up with it.

6. Make shit up. If your partner is late coming home from work, assume that they don't think that you matter. If your partner admits that they have noticed that you have gained weight, assume they think you are fat and unattractive. If your partner tells you that you are gorgeous, assume that they are trying to manipulate you. If your partner tells you that s/he is busy, assume that s/he is mad at you about something. If your partner is preoccupied, make an assumption about the reason this might be the case and take it as a fact.
7. Act jealous. Any time your partner is late, accuse them of spending time with someone else. Any time your partner is makes plans to do something with other people, assume that he or she is having an affair. To amplify the jealousy card, listen in on your partner's phone conversations and read their e-mail so that you can know for sure who s/he is talking to and what about.
8. Try to control your partner's every move. Convince yourself that you are an expert on how everything should be done. Given your vast wisdom, it makes sense that your partner needs your advice and direction for everything. Obviously, if it's not your way, it's not the right way. Therefore, feel free to tell him or her how to vacuum the carpet. Don't hesitate to explain the nuances of baking potatoes (an exasperated tone is especially useful here, especially when combined with a "you are really stupid" look) and act angry if s/he does not follow your directions to the letter. And, if you can get away with it, create a daily "to do" list for your partner comprised of all the things that you would like them to get done before they go to bed, and designate the times at which they should do each activity.
9. Manipulate your partner. If you don't like the fact that your partner spends minutes or hours a day playing computer games, do your best to make them feel guilty about the time they are wasting. If you really want to go out for dinner, hint and complain about how empty your pantry is, how tired you are, and how nice it would be not to have to cook. If your partner expresses frustration about your plans to go out with friends on Saturday night after you tentatively made plans to do something else, act like you are wounded or accuse them of being jealous and controlling.
10. Be rigid. Convince yourself that there is only be one way to do things -- your way. If your partner doesn't like it, s/he needs to get over it. Don't compromise or negotiate. For example, if you want Mexican food and your partner wants steak, don't say, "Hmmm. Guess we could go to Chili's where we can both have what we want." Drag them to Don Pablo's. They'll probably change their mind any way. If you think that the house needs to be thoroughly

cleaned every week, bills must be paid the day that they come, or that the flowerbed needs to be weeded every day, then this is the way that they should be. Do not compromise. Do not negotiate. Push your partner to do it your way and if they refuse, manipulate and/or cajole your partner to your way of thinking.

This list is not exhaustive. If you really want to screw up your relationship(s) you will no doubt find a way.

However, if you don't want to make a mess of your relationship, you'll want to try something different from the strategies listed above. The best way to create and maintain a healthy relationship with your partner is to treat your partner with respect and reverence. This involves respecting your partner's views and ways of doing things. It also involves taking responsibility for your responses to your partner. In some cases, this means that rather than demanding that your partner yield to your desires, you ask yourself how your partner's ways of chopping potatoes is a problem for you and then dealing with your own issues. In other cases, this may involve making it clear that you will not tolerate disrespectful behavior from your partner. In all cases, creating and maintaining healthy relationships involves communicating clearly and honestly with your partner rather than playing games.

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