

"The Loser"

Warning Signs You're Dating a Loser

Joseph M. Carver, Ph.D., Psychologist

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This article was published to the Internet several years ago and was originally written to help identify "Losers" in relationships. The e-mail feedback I have received on the article has been tremendous. It's clear the article is a way of identifying not only "losers" but controlling, abusive, and manipulating individuals. It's also obvious these warning signs are not only found in dating relationships - but in our spouse, our parents, our friends, and our relatives. There are more victims in the environment of the Loser than his or her partner.

I've been contacted for help by the friends and loved ones of people involved in relationships with Losers (controlling and/or abusive partners). The loved ones want to understand the situation and ask for recommendations and guidance. For this group I have recently published "Love and Stockholm Syndrome: The Mystery of Loving an Abuser". A link to this article is found at the end of this page.

Obviously, this article has created the need for sequels. I hope to publish a guide to assist Losers who want to change their life and behavior. An article addressing sons and daughters who were parented by Losers is also being planned. If our parent or parents have the characteristics listed in this article, our ability to function as a healthy adult may be hindered due to the dysfunctional family/parent model. My goal is to follow this issue and provide help and guidance to all those involved with controlling and abusive individuals - from partners to extended victims.

Introduction

Very few relationships start on terms other than sweetness and politeness. In the beginning, "the honeymoon" of the relationship, it's difficult to determine what type of individual you are dating. Both you and the date are guarded, trying to obtain

information about the other as much as possible without seeming like a police detective.

Romantic relationships can be wonderful with the right person. A relationship with the wrong individual however can lead to years of heartache, emotional/social damage, and even physical damage. A damaging adult partner can damage us, damage our loved ones, and even damage the way we feel about love and romance in the future. They can turn what is supposed to be a loving, supporting, and understanding relationship into the "fatal attraction" often described in movies. There are a variety of "bad choices" that may be encountered each week - most of which are easily to identify and avoid. We all know to avoid people that appear insane or abusive and not select them as a dating partner. However, some individuals are better at hiding their personality and behavior abnormalities. In an effort to provide some warning about these very damaging individuals, this paper will outline a type of individual commonly found in the dating scene, a male or female labeled "The Loser".

"The Loser" is a type of partner that creates much social, emotional and psychological damage in a relationship. "The Loser" has permanent personality characteristics that create this damage. These are characteristics that they accept simply as the way they are and not a problem or psychological difficulty. In one sense, they have always lived with this personality and behavior, often something they probably learned from their relatives/family. Psychologists usually treat the victims of "The Loser", women or men who arrive at the office severely depressed with their self-confidence and self-esteem totally destroyed.

The following list is an attempt to outline the characteristics of "The Loser" and provide a manner in which women and men can identify potentially damaging relationships before they are themselves severely damaged emotionally or even physically. If your partner possesses even one of these features, there is risk in the relationship. More than three of these indicators and you are involved with "The Loser" in a very high risk relationship that will eventually create damage to you. When a high number of these features are present - it's not a probably or possibility. You will be hurt and damaged by "The Loser" if you stay in the relationship.

1. Rough Treatment "The Loser" will hurt you on purpose. If he or she hits you, twists your arm, pulls your hair, kicks you, shoves you, or breaks your personal property EVEN ONCE, drop them. Male losers often begin with behaviors that move you physically or hit the wall. Female losers often slap, kick and even punch their male partners when upset.

2. Quick Attachment and Expression "The Loser" has very shallow emotions and connections with others. One of the things that might attract you to "The Loser" is

how quickly he or she says "I Love You" or wants to marry or commit to you. Typically, in less than a few weeks of dating you'll hear that you're the love of their life, they want to be with you forever, and they want to marry you. You'll receive gifts, a variety of promises, and be showered with their attention and nice gestures. This is the "honeymoon phase" - where they catch you and convince you that they are the best thing that ever happened to you. Remember the business saying "If it's too good to be true it probably is (too good to be true)!" You may be so overwhelmed by this display of instant attraction, instant commitment, and instant planning for the future that you'll miss the major point - it doesn't make sense!! Normal, healthy individuals require a long process to develop a relationship because there is so much at stake. Healthy individuals will wait for a lot of information before offering a commitment - not three weeks. It's true that we can become infatuated with others quickly - but not make such unrealistic promises and have the future planned after three dates. The rapid warm-up is always a sign of shallow emotions which later cause "The Loser" to detach from you as quickly as they committed. "The Loser" typically wants to move in with you or marry you in less than four weeks or very early in the relationship.

3. Frightening Temper "The Loser" has a scary temper. If your boyfriend or girlfriend blows up and does dangerous things, like driving too fast because they're mad, breaking/throwing things, getting into fights, or threatening others - that temper will soon be turned in your direction. In the beginning of the relationship, you will be exposed to "witnessed violence" - fights with others, threats toward others, angry outbursts at others, etc. You will also hear of violence in their life. You will see and witness this temper - throwing things, yelling, cursing, driving fast, hitting the walls, and kicking things. That quickly serves to intimidate you and fear their potential for violence, although "The Loser" quickly assures you that they are angry at others or situations, not at you. At first, you will be assured that they will never direct the hostility and violence at you - but they are clearly letting you know that they have that ability and capability - and that it might come your way. Later, you fear challenging or confronting them - fearing that same temper and violence will be turned in your direction.

4. Killing Your Self-Confidence "The Loser" repeatedly puts you down. They constantly correct your slight mistakes, making you feel "on guard", unintelligent, and leaving you with the feeling that you are always doing something wrong. They tell you that you're too fat, too unattractive, or don't talk correctly or look well. This gradual chipping away at your confidence and self-esteem allows them to later treat you badly - as though you deserved it. In public, you will be "walking on eggshells" - always fearing you are doing or saying something that will later create a temper outburst or verbal argument.

5. Cutting Off Your Support In order to control someone completely, you must cut off their supportive friends - sometimes even their family. "The Loser" feels your friends and family might influence you or offer negative opinions about their behavior. "The Loser" begins by telling you these friends treat you badly, take advantage of you, and don't understand the special nature of the love you share with them. In some cases, if they can't get rid of your best same-sex friend, "The Loser" will claim he or she made a pass at them. If you talk to your friends or family, "The Loser" will punish you by asking multiple questions or making nasty accusations. Eventually, rather than face the verbal punishment, interrogation, and abuse, you'll develop the feeling that it's better not to talk to family and friends. You will withdraw from friends and family, prompting them to become upset with you. "The Loser" then tells you they are treating you badly again and you'd be better to keep your distance from them. Once you are isolated and alone, without support, their control over you can increase.

6. The Mean and Sweet Cycle "The Loser" cycles from mean to sweet and back again. The cycle starts when they are intentionally hurtful and mean. You may be verbally abused, cursed, and threatened over something minor. Suddenly, the next day they become sweet, doing all those little things they did when you started dating. You hang on, hoping each mean-then-sweet cycle is the last one. The other purpose of the mean cycle is to allow "The Loser" to say very nasty things about you or those you care about, again chipping away at your self-esteem and self-confidence. "The Loser" often apologizes but the damage to your self-esteem is already done - exactly as planned.

7. It's Always Your Fault "The Loser" blames you for their anger as well as any other behavior that is incorrect. When they cheat on you, yell at you, treat you badly, damage your property, or embarrass you publicly - it's somehow your fault. If you are ten minutes late for a date, it's your fault that the male loser drives 80 miles per hour, runs people off the road, and pouts the rest of the evening. "The Loser" tells you their anger and misbehavior would not have happened if you had not made some simple mistake, had loved them more, or had not questioned their behavior. "The Loser" never, repeat "never", takes personal responsibility for their behavior - it's always the fault of someone else. If they drive like a maniac and try to pull an innocent driver off the highway to assault them - it's actually the fault of the other driver (not his) as they didn't use a turn signal when they changed lanes. They give you the impression that you had it (anger, yelling, assault) coming and deserved the anger, violence, pouting, or physical display of aggression.

8. Breakup Panic "The Loser" panics at the idea of breaking up - unless it's totally their idea - then you're dropped like a hot rock. Abusive boyfriends often break down and cry, they plead, they promise to change, and they offer marriage/trips/gifts when you threaten ending the relationship. Both male and female losers may threaten suicide, threaten to return to old sweethearts (who feel lucky they're gone!), or

threaten to quit their job and leave the area - as though you will be responsible for those decisions. "The Loser" offers a multitude of "deals" and halfway measures, like "Let's just date one more month!"

They shower you with phone calls, often every five minutes, hoping that you will make an agreement or see them just to stop the telephone harassment. Some call your relatives, your friends, their friends, and anyone else they can think of - telling those people to call you and tell you how much they love you. Creative losers often create so much social pressure that the victim agrees to go back to the bad relationship rather than continue under the social pressure. Imagine trying to end a relationship and receiving tearful calls from all his or her relatives (they secretly hope you'll keep them so they don't have to), seeing a plea for your return in the newspaper or even on a local billboard, receiving flowers at work each day, or having them arrive at your place of work and offer you a wedding ring (male loser technique) or inform you that they might be pregnant (female loser technique) in front of your coworkers! Their reaction is emotionally intense, a behavior they use to keep you an emotional prisoner. If you go back to them, you actually fear a worse reaction if you threaten to leave again (making you a prisoner) and they later frequently recall the incident to you as further evidence of what a bad person you are. Remember, if your prize dog jumps the fence and escapes, if you get him back you build a higher fence. Once back in the grasp of "The Loser" - escape will be three times as difficult the next time.

9. No Outside Interests "The Loser" will encourage you to drop your hobbies, interests, and involvement with others. If you have an individual activity, they demand that they accompany you, making you feel miserable during the entire activity. The idea behind this is to prevent you from having fun or interests other than those which they totally control.

10. Paranoid Control "The Loser" will check up on you and keep track of where you are and who you are with. If you speak to a member of the opposite sex, you receive twenty questions about how you know them. If you don't answer their phone call, you are asked where you were, what were you doing, who you were talking to, etc. They will notice the type of mud on your car, question why you shop certain places, and question why you called a friend, why the friend called you, and so forth. Some losers follow you to the grocery, then later ask if you've been there in an attempt to catch you in a lie. In severe cases, they go through your mail, look through your purse/wallet, hit your redial on the phone when they arrive, or search through your garbage for evidence. High-tech losers may encourage you to make "private" calls to friends from their residence, calls that are being secretly taped for later reference. They may begin to tell you what to wear, what to listen to in music, and how to behave in public. Eventually, they tell you that you can not talk to certain friends or acquaintances, go to certain places, or talk about certain issues in public. If no date is

present on Friday night - "The Loser" will inform you that they will call you that night - sometime. That effectively keeps you home, awaiting the call, fearing the verbal abuse and questions you might receive if you weren't home for the call. This technique allows "The Loser" to do what they want socially, at the same time controlling your behavior from a distance or a local bar.

11. Public Embarrassment In an effort to keep you under control while in public, "The Loser" will lash out at you, call you names, or say cruel or embarrassing things about you in private or in front of people. When in public, you quickly learn that any opinion you express may cause them to verbally attack you, either at the time or later. If you stay with "The Loser" too long, you'll soon find yourself politely smiling, saying nothing, and holding on to their arm when in public. You'll also find yourself walking with your head down, fearful of seeing a friend who might speak to you and create an angry reaction in "The Loser".

12. It's Never Enough "The Loser" convinces you that you are never quite good enough. You don't say "I love you" enough, you don't stand close enough, you don't do enough for them after all their sacrifices, and your behavior always falls short of what is expected. This is another method of destroying your self-esteem and confidence. After months of this technique, they begin telling you how lucky you are to have them - somebody who tolerates someone so inadequate and worthless as you.

13. Entitlement "The Loser" has a tremendous sense of entitlement, the attitude that they have a perfectly logical right to do whatever they desire. If cut off in traffic, "The Loser" feels they have the right to run the other driver off the road, assault them, and endanger the lives of other drivers with their temper tantrum. Keep in mind, this same sense of entitlement will be used against you. If you disobey their desires or demands, or violate one of their rules, they feel they are entitled to punish you in any manner they see fit.

14. Your Friends and Family Dislike Him As the relationship continues, your friends and family will see what "The Loser" is doing to you. They will notice a change in your personality or your withdrawal. They will protest. "The Loser" will tell you they are jealous of the "special love" you have and then use their protest and opinion as further evidence that they are against you - not him. The mention of your family members or friends will spark an angry response from them - eventually placing you in the situation where you stop talking about those you care about, even your own family members. "The Loser" will be jealous and threatened by anyone you are close to - even your children. In some cases, your parents or brothers/sisters will not be allowed to visit your home.

15. Bad Stories People often let you know about their personality by the stories they tell about themselves. It's the old story about giving a person enough rope and they'll hang themselves. The stories a person tells informs us of how they see themselves, what they think is interesting, and what they think will impress you. A humorous individual will tell funny stories on himself. "The Loser" tells stories of violence, aggression, being insensitive to others, rejecting others, etc. They may tell you about past relationships and in every case, they assure you that they were treated horribly despite how wonderful they were to that person. They brag about their temper and outbursts because they don't see anything wrong with violence and actually take pride in the "I don't take nothing from nobody" attitude. People define themselves with their stories, much like a culture is described by its folklore and legends. Listen to these stories - they tell you how you will eventually be treated and what's coming your way.

16. The Waitress Test It's been said that when dating, the way an individual treats a waitress or other neutral person of the opposite sex is the way they will treat you in six months. During the "honeymoon phase" of a relationship, you will be treated like a king or queen. However, during that time "The Loser" has not forgotten how he or she basically feels about the opposite sex. Waitresses, clerks, or other neutral individuals will be treated badly. If they are cheap - you'll never receive anything once the honeymoon is over. If they whine, complain, criticize, and torment - that's how they'll treat you in six months. A mentally healthy person is consistent, they treat almost all people the same way all the time. If you find yourself dating a man who treats you like a queen and other females like dirt - hit the road.

17. The Reputation As mentioned, mentally healthy individuals are consistent in their personality and their behavior. "The Loser" may have two distinct reputations - a group of individuals who will give you glowing reports and a group that will warn you that they are serious trouble. If you ask ten people about a new restaurant - five say it's wonderful and five say it's a hog pit - you clearly understand that there's some risk involved in eating there. "The Loser" may actually brag about their reputation as a "butt kicker", "womanizer", "hot temper" or "being crazy". They may tell you stories where other's have called them crazy or suggested that they receive professional help. Pay attention to the reputation. Reputation is the public perception of an individual's behavior. If the reputation has two sides, good and bad, your risk is high. You will be dealing with the bad side once the honeymoon is over in the relationship. With severe behavior problems, "The Loser" will be found to have almost no friends, just acquaintances. Emotionally healthy and moral individuals will not tolerate friendships with losers that treat others so badly. If you find yourself disliking the friends of "The Loser", it's because they operate the same way he or she does and you can see it in them.

18. Walking on Eggshells As a relationship with "The Loser" continues, you will gradually be exposed to verbal intimidation, temper tantrums, lengthy interrogations about trivial matters, violence/threats directed at others but witnessed by you, paranoid preoccupation with your activities, and a variety of put-downs on your character. You will quickly find yourself "walking on eggshells" in their presence - fearful to bring up topics, fearful to mention that you spoke to or saw a friend, and fearful to question or criticize the behavior of "The Loser". Instead of experiencing the warmth and comfort of love, you will be constantly on edge, tense when talking to others (they might say something that you'll have to explain later), and fearful that you'll see someone you'll have to greet in public. Dates and times together will be more comfortable and less threatening when totally alone - exactly what "The Loser" wants - no interference with their control or dominance.

19. Discounted Feelings/Opinions "The Loser" is so self-involved and self-worshipping that the feelings and opinions of others are considered worthless. As the relationship continues and you begin to question what you are feeling or seeing in their behavior, you will be told that your feelings and opinions don't make sense, they're silly, and that you are emotionally disturbed to even think of such things. "The Loser" has no interest in your opinion or your feelings - but they will be disturbed and upset that you dare question their behavior. "The Loser" is extremely hostile toward criticism and often reacts with anger or rage when their behavior is questioned.

20. They Make You "Crazy" "The Loser" operates in such a damaging way that you find yourself doing "crazy" things in self-defense. If "The Loser" is scheduled to arrive at 8:00 pm - you call Time & Temperature to cover the redial, check your garbage for anything that might get you in trouble, and call your family and friends to tell them not to call you that night. You warn family/friends not to bring up certain topics, avoid locations in the community where you might see co-workers or friends, and not speak to others for fear of the 20 questions. You become paranoid as well - being careful what you wear and say. Nonviolent males find themselves in physical fights with female losers. Nonviolent females find themselves yelling and screaming when they can no longer take the verbal abuse or intimidation. In emotional and physical self-defense, we behave differently and oddly. While we think we are "going crazy" - it's important to remember that there is no such thing as "normal behavior" in a combat situation. Rest assured that your behavior will return to normal if you detach from "The Loser" before permanent psychological damage is done.

Dangerous Versions of "The Loser"

There are more severe if not dangerous versions of "The Loser" that have been identified over the years. If you are involved in a relationship with one of these versions, you may require professional and legal assistance to save yourself.

Physical Abuser Physical abusers begin the relationship with physical moving - shoving, pushing, forcing, etc. That quickly moves into verbal threats with physical gestures - the finger in the face, clinched fist in the face, and voiced physical threats such as "You make me want to break your face!" Eventually, these combine to form actual physical abuse - hitting, slapping, and kicking. "The Loser" is always sorry the next day and begins the mean-then-sweet cycle all over again. Getting away from physical abusers often requires the assistance of family, law enforcement agencies, or local abuse agencies. Female losers often physically attack their partner, break car windows, or behave with such violence that the male partner is forced to physically protect himself from the assault. If the female loser is bruised in the process of self-protection, as when physically restraining her from hitting, those bruises are then "displayed" to others as evidence of what a bad person the partner is and how abusive they have been in the relationship.

Psychotic Losers There are losers that are severely ill in a psychiatric sense - the movie description of the "Fatal Attraction". Some may tell you wild stories and try to convince you that they are connected to The Mob or a government agency (CIA, FBI, etc.). They may fake terminal illness, pregnancy, or disease. They intimidate and frighten you with comments such as "I can have anyone killed..." or "No one leaves a relationship with me...". If you try to end the relationship, they react violently and give you the impression that you, your friends, or your family are in serious danger. People often then remain in the abusive and controlling relationship due to fear of harm to their family or their reputation. While such fears are unrealistic as "The Loser" is only interested in controlling you, those fears feel very real when combined with the other characteristics of "The Loser".

Psychotic or psychiatrically ill losers may also stalk, follow, or harass you. They may threaten physical violence, show weapons, or threaten to kill you or themselves if you leave them. If you try to date others, they may follow you or threaten your new date. Your new date may be subjected to phone harassment, vandalism, threats, and even physical assaults. If you are recently divorced, separated, or recently ended another relationship, "The Loser" may be intimidating toward your ex-partner, fearing you might return if the other partner is not "scared off". Just remember - everything "The Loser" has ever done to anyone will be coming your way. "The Loser" may send you pictures of you, your children, or your family - pictures they have taken secretly - hinting that they can "reach out and touch" those you love. You may need help and legal action to separate from these individuals.

Guidelines for Detachment

Separating from "The Loser" often involves three stages: The Detachment, Ending the Relationship, and the Follow-up Protection.

The Detachment

During this part of separating from "The Loser", you recognize what you must do and create an Exit Plan. Many individuals fail in attempts to detach from "The Loser" because they leave suddenly and impulsively, without proper planning, and without resources. In many cases, "The Loser" has isolated their partner from others, has control of finances, or has control of major exit needs such as an automobile. During the detachment phase you should...

- Observe the way you are treated. Watch for the methods listed above and see how "The Loser" works.
- Gradually become more boring, talk less, share less feelings and opinions. The goal is almost to bore "The Loser" to lessen the emotional attachment, at the same time not creating a situation which would make you a target.
- Quietly contact your family and supportive others. Determine what help they might be - a place to stay, protection, financial help, etc.
- If you fear violence or abuse, check local legal or law enforcement options such as a restraining order.
- If "The Loser" is destructive, slowly move your valuables from the home if together, or try to recover valuables if in their possession. In many cases, you may lose some personal items during your detachment - a small price to pay to get rid of "The Loser".
- Stop arguing, debating or discussing issues. Stop defending and explaining yourself - responding with comments such as "I've been so confused lately" or "I'm under so much stress I don't know why I do anything anymore".
- Begin dropping hints that you are depressed, burned out, or confused about life in general. Remember - "The Loser" never takes responsibility for what happens in any relationship. "The Loser" will feel better about leaving the relationship if they can blame it on you. Many individuals are forced to "play confused" and dull, allowing "The Loser" to tell others "My girlfriend (or boyfriend) about half nuts!" They may tell others you're crazy or confused but you'll be safer. Allow them to think anything they want about you as long as you're in the process of detaching.
- Don't start another relationship. That will only complicate your situation and increase the anger. Your best bet is to "lay low" for several months. Remember, "The Loser" will quickly locate another victim and become instantly attached as long as the focus on you is allowed to die down.

- As "The Loser" starts to question changes in your behavior, admit confusion, depression, emotionally numbness, and a host of other boring reactions. This sets the foundation for the ending of the relationship.

Ending the Relationship

Remembering that "The Loser" doesn't accept responsibility, responds with anger to criticism, and is prone to panic detachment reactions - ending the relationship continues the same theme as the detachment.

- Explain that you are emotionally numb, confused, and burned out. You can't feel anything for anybody and you want to end the relationship almost for his or her benefit. Remind them that they've probably noticed something is wrong and that you need time to sort out your feelings and fix whatever is wrong with you. As disgusting as it may seem, you may have to use a theme of "I'm not right for anyone at this point in my life." If "The Loser" can blame the end on you, as they would if they ended the relationship anyway, they will depart faster.

- If "The Loser" panics, you'll receive a shower of phone calls, letters, notes on your car, etc. React to each in the same manner - a boring thanks. If you overreact or give in, you've lost control again.

- Focus on your need for time away from the situation. Don't agree to the many negotiations that will be offered - dating less frequently, dating only once a week, taking a break for only a week, going to counseling together, etc. As long as "The Loser" has contact with you they feel there is a chance to manipulate you.

- "The Loser" will focus on making you feel guilty. In each phone contact you'll hear how much you are loved, how much was done for you, and how much they have sacrificed for you. At the same time, you'll hear about what a bum you are for leading them on, not giving them an opportunity to fix things, and embarrassing them by ending the relationship.

- Don't try to make them understand how you feel - it won't happen. "The Loser" only is concerned with how they feel - your feelings are irrelevant. You will be wasting your time trying to make them understand and they will see the discussions as an opportunity to make you feel more guilty and manipulate you.

- Don't fall for sudden changes in behavior or promises of marriage, trips, gifts, etc. By this time you have already seen how "The Loser" is normally and naturally. While anyone can change for a short period of time, they always return to their normal behavior once the crisis is over.

- Seek professional counseling for yourself or the support of others during this time. You will need encouragement and guidance. Keep in mind, if "The Loser" finds out you are seeking help they will criticize the counseling, the therapist, or the effort.
- Don't use terms like "someday", "maybe", or "in the future". When "The Loser" hears such possibilities, they think you are weakening and will increase their pressure.
- Imagine a dead slot machine. If we are in Las Vegas at a slot machine and pull the handle ten times and nothing happens - we move on to another machine. However, if on the tenth time the slot machine pays us even a little, we keep pulling the handle - thinking the jackpot is on the way. If we are very stern and stable about the decision to end the relationship over many days, then suddenly offer a possibility or hope for reconciliation - we've given a little pay and the pressure will continue. Never change your position - always say the same thing. "The Loser" will stop playing a machine that doesn't pay off and quickly move to another.

Follow-up Protection

"The Loser" never sees their responsibility or involvement in the difficulties in the relationship. From a psychological standpoint, "The Loser" has lived and behaved in this manner most of their life, clearly all of their adult life. As they really don't see themselves at fault or as an individual with a problem, "The Loser" tends to think that the girlfriend or boyfriend is simply going through a phase - their partner (victim) might be temporarily mixed up or confused, they might be listening to the wrong people, or they might be angry about something and will get over it soon. "The Loser" rarely detaches completely and will often try to continue contact with the partner even after the relationship is terminated. During the Follow-up Protection period, some guidelines are:

- Never change your original position. It's over permanently! Don't talk about possible changes in your position in the future. You might think that will calm "The Loser" but it only tells them that the possibilities still exist and only a little more pressure is needed to return to the relationship.
- Don't agree to meetings or reunions to discuss old times. For "The Loser", discussing old times is actually a way to upset you, put you off guard, and use the guilt to hook you again.
- Don't offer details about your new life or relationships. Assure him that both his life and your life are now private and that you hope they are happy.

- If you start feeling guilty during a phone call, get off the phone fast. More people return to bad marriages and relationships due to guilt than anything else. If you listen to those phone calls, as though taping them, you'll find "The Loser" spends most of the call trying to make you feel guilty.

- In any contact with the ex "Loser", provide only a status report, much like you'd provide to your Aunt Gladys. For example: "I'm still working hard and not getting any better at tennis. That's about it."

- When "The Loser" tells you how difficult the breakup has been, share with him some general thoughts about breaking-up and how finding the right person is difficult. While "The Loser" wants to focus on your relationship, talk in terms of Ann Landers - "Well, breaking up is hard on anyone. Dating is tough in these times. I'm sure we'll eventually find someone that's right for both of us." Remember - nothing personal!

- Keep all contact short and sweet - the shorter the better. As far as "The Loser" is concerned, you're always on your way somewhere, there's something in the microwave, or your mother is walking up the steps to your home. Wish "The Loser" well but always with the same tone of voice that you might offer to someone you have just talked to at the grocery store. For phone conversations, electronic companies make a handy gadget that produces about twenty sounds - a doorbell, an oven or microwave alarm, a knock on the door, etc. That little device is handy to use on the phone - the microwave dinner just came out or someone is at the door. Do whatever you have to do to keep the conversation short - and not personal.

Summary

In all of our relationships throughout life, we will meet a variety of individuals with many different personalities. Some are a joy to have in our life and some provide us with life-long love and security. Others we meet pose some risk to us and our future due to their personality and attitudes. Both in medicine and mental health - the key to health is the early identification and treatment of problems - before they reach the point that they are beyond treatment. In years of psychotherapy and counseling practice, treating the victims of "The Loser", patterns of attitude and behavior emerge in "The Loser" that can now be listed and identified in the hopes of providing early identification and warning. When those signs and indicators surface and the pattern is identified, we must move quickly to get away from the situation. Continuing a relationship with "The Loser" will result in a relationship that involves intimidation, fear, angry outbursts, paranoid control, and a total loss of your self-esteem and self-confidence.

If you have been involved in a long-term relationship with "The Loser", after you successfully escape you may notice that you have sustained some psychological damage that will require professional repair. In many cases, the stress has been so severe that you may have a stress-produced depression. You may have severe damage to your self-confidence/self-esteem or to your feelings about the opposite sex or relationships. Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and counselors are available in your community to assist and guide you as you recover from your damaging relationship with "The Loser".

[Joseph M Carver, Ph.D., Psychologist](#)

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NEW ARTICLE

For the family and friends of individuals involved in a relationship with a Loser, I've written an article that discusses the relationship from the outside view. It may help family and friends understand the relationship and provide help in a positive manner. The article is entitled "Love and Stockholm Syndrome: The Mystery of Loving an Abuser" It can be found at this link:

[Love and Stockholm Syndrome](#)