Verbal and Emotional Abuse Information
(compiled from various books and the internet)

Recommended books:
*The Emotionally Destructive Relationship: Seeing It, Stopping It, Surviving It* by Leslie Vernick
(Leslie is a Christian author)

*The Verbally Abusive Relationship* by Patricia Evans

*The Verbally Abusive Man: Can He Change? A Woman’s Guide to Deciding Whether to Stay or Go* by Patricia Evans

*Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men* by Lundy Bancroft
(particularly good when physical abuse is occurring)

Examples of Verbal, Emotional and Physical Abuse

1) Verbally Abusive Words and Phrases that Define You:

He tells you *what you are*. For example, you are: a cold-hearted bitch, clueless, dishonest, high maintenance, holier than thou, insensitive, impossible to deal with, irresponsible, immature, lazy, mean, mental, self-centered, spoiled, a stupid ass, a slut, stupid, thin-skinned, a terrible wife, a know-it-all, pathetic, wrong, etc.

He tells you *what you are doing*: For example, you are: acting emotional, attacking me, being dramatic, doing it all wrong, jumping to conclusions, looking for a fight, making a big deal out of nothing, nagging, not trying, overreacting, pissing me off, trying to start a fight, yapping, etc.

He tells you *how you feel*. For example, you: are confused, are stressed, are never happy, aren't sad, aren't tired, enjoy arguing, don't love me, don't care, have nothing to cry about, feel too much, love your parents more than me, only care about yourself, etc.

He tells you *what you need or don't need*. For example, you: don't need to make a big deal out of it, need to go to therapy, need glasses, need to toughen up, need to submit, etc.

He tells you *what you want*. For example, you: just want to be right, want me gone so you can be with someone else, want to hurt me on purpose, want to embarrass me, etc.

He tells you *what you don't want*. For example, you: don't want that, don't want to try.

He tells you *what you are trying to do*. For example, you're trying to: be right, control me, get attention, make me look bad, show me up, start a fight, win, etc.
He tells you what you do. For example, you: always think I am wrong, blame me for everything, do nothing for me, nitpick, look for problems, push my buttons, take everything out of context, turn everything into an argument, twist my words, etc.

He tells you how you are. For example: Something is wrong with you, You're not sick or tired, You've got your head up your ass, The problem with you is....., etc.

He tells you what you think. For example, you think: I am wrong, you know best, you're always right, you're so smart, you're better than everyone else, it is all my fault, etc.

He tells you what you know, should know, or don't know. For example, you: don't know how good you have it, don't know how to communicate, don't know how to take a joke, don’t know what real hurt is, know what I meant, know how I felt, should know how I feel, etc.

He tells you what you should/must do. For example: buck up, do my laundry, get in here, get off my back, get over it, fix yourself, shut your pie hole, forget it, see a shrink, stop getting so defensive, you should do it this way, you should have known better, etc.

He tells you what you did. For example, you: did nothing about it, did it all wrong, did it on purpose, did nothing around here, poisoned the kids against me, etc.

He tells you what you can't or couldn't do. For example, you: can't cook at all, can't control yourself, can't do anything right, can't even keep track of the simplest thing.

He tells you your future. For example: You will screw it up, you won't understand, you couldn’t get a college degree, you're going to say...., no one will love you as much as I do.

He tells you your past. For example, you: always intended to leave, always wanted control of this relationship.

He tells you that you are responsible. For example: It's your fault if you're hurt, it's all your fault, it was really your responsibility to make me stop what I was doing.

He tells you how you take things. For example, you: take things all wrong, take things too seriously, take me for granted, take things too personally, take things too far.

He tells you how you act. For example, you act like: a child, a fool, a loser, a whore.

He tells you what you get. For example, you: always get what you want, always get your way, get what you deserve.

He tells you what you have. For example, you have: bad taste, issues, everything a woman could want, poor self-esteem, no direction, a problem, to have the last word.

He tells you what you don't have. For example, you don't have: anything to complain about, a sense of humor, an original idea ever.
He tells you *what you don't do*. For example, you don't: make love enough, take care of me.

He tells you *what you are like*. For example, you are like: a child, a crazy person, your mother, my father, a vulture waiting to pounce on me when I make a mistake.

He tells you *that your perception is wrong*. For example: It wasn't that way, it didn't happen, it's just your perception, you're wrong, you're lying because that never happened.

He tells you *how other people feel about you*. For example: nobody likes you, you have everybody fooled, they only act like your friends to use you.

*He tries to justify his behavior.* For example: If what I say hurts you then it must be true.

*He tells you that it isn't possible for him to talk kindly.* For example: Just write a script and I'll tell you what you want to hear.

2) **Covert (hidden or disguised) verbal abuse**

*He disguises abuse as a question* by prefacing any of the abusive statements with a question by saying, for example: “I don’t see why you’re so… _____ (ex: upset)”
“I can’t believe you…(ex: are going to that meeting instead of this football game)”; “I’m amazed that you…(ex: can’t take a joke); “I don’t mean to say you’re… _____ (ex: too sensitive) but… (ex: you take things too seriously, sometimes); “I am not trying to tell you that you don’t… (ex: know what you are talking about) but… (ex: you have no idea).

*He defines you as nonexistent* by walking away/reading/turning on the TV/leaving the house while you are talking.

*He denies the above abuses* by saying, for example: “It was just a joke, I’m kidding” “Laugh a little, why don’t you?” “Lighten up, will you? You are killing me here.”

*He blames you* for the abuse by saying, for example: “If you hadn’t brought it up…then I wouldn’t be so mad…just stop talking about it.”

*He defines you by implication or insinuation.* For example, implying that:
You didn’t think: “What were you thinking?”
You don’t work: “What do you do all day?”
You are trying to start a fight: “Why is everything always a fight?”
You don’t do your share: “When will you do your part in this marriage?”
You aren’t capable: “If you can’t handle this, do I need to manage your job too?”
You break agreements: “I do what I say I’ll do.”
You are out of touch with reality: “Let’s get down to reality and out of La La Land.”
You should accept rough sex: “Hot women like it that way.”
You didn’t turn out to be what he wanted: “Yes, she’s my wife. Be careful what you pray for because you might get it.”

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You should be happier: “Other women would give anything to have your life.”
You are an object to get rid of: “You can have her.”
You are unreliable: “Who knows where she is?” to all who ask.
You are never good enough at what you do: “I would have done it differently” or “If it were up to me, I would have….”
You can’t do what you want: “You don’t have time for that!! You already do too much.”
You don’t contribute: “I make the money around here and you just keep spending it.”
You’re responsible for all lost items: “You should know where things are around here.”
You tossed it: “Where have you tossed my…?”
You shouldn’t do something “Why would you want to do that?”
He ends a conversation by diverting with a statement like, “I don’t want to argue with you right now. I’ve got too much to do.”

He makes unilateral decisions by saying, for example: “there’s nothing to talk about” “you stay out of that” “you don’t need to know about the finances, you wouldn’t understand, anyway” “it’s too complicated to explain”

Other Abuses and Violence:
Back the other up against a wall or in a corner
Block the other person’s door
Bump and back up into the other
Criticize the other
Curse the other
Direct the other
Drive aggressively
Get in the other’s face
Give the other the silent treatment or cold shoulder
Interfere with the other’s sleep
Interrogate the other *(a series of questions designed to be so rapid they prevent the other from completing a thought or response.)*
Jab the other with a sharp object
Lecture the other
Mimic or mock the other
Pinch or pour water on the other
Pound and break things
Push the other down
Rage at the other
Restrain the other
Roll eyes at the other
Shove or slap the other
Slam doors
Spit on the other
Strangle the other
Take away the phone
Taunt or threaten the other (If you leave, you'll never see these kids again; I'll cut you off financially; I'm leaving you; I'll kill you; I'll leave you with nothing; I'll make your life a living hell)
Throw the other to the floor or across the room
Throw things at or near the other
Tickle the other beyond limits
Wake the other up at night

---taken from The Verbally Abusive Man: Can He Change? A Woman’s Guide to Deciding Whether to Stay or Go by Patricia Evans (2006)

Seven Signs You're In a Verbally Abusive Relationship

1. He seems irritated or angry with you several times a week. When you ask why he's mad, he either denies it or tells you it's in some way your fault.
2. When you feel hurt and try to talk with him, the issues never get resolved. He might refuse to discuss your upset feelings by saying "You're just trying to start an argument!" or claiming he has no idea what you're talking about.
3. You frequently feel frustrated because you can't get him to understand your intentions.
4. You're upset—not so much about concrete issues like how much time to spend together, but about communication: what he thinks you said and what you heard him say.
5. You sometimes think, "What's wrong with me? I shouldn't feel so bad."
6. He seems to take the opposite view from you on almost everything, and his opinion isn't stated as "I think," but as if you're wrong and he's right.
7. You can't recall saying "Cut it out!" or "Stop it!"

How can his voice drown out your inner knowing? Patricia Evans explains.

- The abuse only happens when you're alone with him. Friends and coworkers might think he's a prince, so you doubt your own perceptions or believe his anger must be your fault.
- Verbal abuse escalates gradually; you adapt. (The abuse might also become physical.) He's Jekyll and Hyde, with just enough sweet times to keep you hoping the relationship will improve.
- Assuming he's rational (aren't all men?) and wants what you want (loving mutuality), you strain to make sense of what he says. But it is nonsense, designed to confuse you. The shocking truth is, he seeks control, not intimacy.

Yet you can save your spirit. Evans maps out the steps to emotional rescue:

- Recognize that the abuse has nothing to do with you or your actions or qualities.
- Stop trying to explain and defend yourself. Instead, start setting limits: "Cut that out!" or "I don't want to hear that." Or ask "What? What did you say? What are you doing?"
- Read “The Verbally Abusive Man: Can He Change?” by Patricia Evans for detailed instructions on confronting and handling verbal and emotional abuse.
- Listen carefully to your feelings. Believe them, not him.
• Get support from a counselor or therapist. Make sure she understands that this isn't just a "conflict" or an "argument."
• Keep in mind that an abuser might be able to change himself if he really wants to—but you can't change him. You can honor and nurture yourself.

Verbal Abuse In Relationships
by Patricia Evans

Most people recognize name-calling as verbal abuse, but name-calling is just one of more than a dozen categories of verbal abuse. Typically, people who are put down in verbally abusive relationships think that somehow, in some way their being treated has something to do with them. They have the impression that there is something about themselves that makes their loved one mad at them, apprehensive of them, distant toward them, fed up with them, unbelieving of them, or disdainful of them.

Since verbally abusive relationships have been ignored by our culture for thousands of years and since there are so many forms of verbal abuse from the most subtle to the most direct, it is not easy for people in abusive relationships to understand what is going on. For this reason, I have written a book that thousands of people say helps them more than anything else they’ve read to recognize verbal abuse right when it’s happening.

Conversely, people who frequently indulge in verbal abuse may have little if any conscious awareness of what they are doing. This idea may seem strange to people looking in on an abusive relationship. But many people have told me that they were frequently abusive and never thought anything about their behavior.

Abusers are Often Blind to Their Abusive Behavior

1. If people in relationships believe that they are entitled to give orders— that it is their right-they don’t necessarily think that ordering their mate around is abusive. They usually think that their assumed rights, prerogatives and privileges make this kind of behavior okay. They are then blind to their abusive behavior.

2. Similarly, they may think that they have a right to put down their partner, or to tell their partner what s/he’s thinking, meaning, and so forth. They might think they are entitled to act the way they do because of their age, because they’ve been around the place longer, are of a superior gender or race, or because they make more money than their mate. Their sense of entitlement blinds them to their abusive behavior.

3. The abuser may think verbal and/or physical abuse—acts against their mate—are justified because their mate “makes them do it.” Many people who batter both verbally and physically, and who are jailed as a consequence, believe the abuse is their mate’s fault—as if their mate did the verbal and physical battering. This “crazy” thinking blinds them to their abusive behavior.

4. The abuser may hold a belief in the right of one person to wield power over another person. This belief blinds abusers to their abusive behavior.
5. People who indulge in verbal abuse are also blinded to their abusive behavior when they are lacking in the ability to acknowledge and accept their mate’s feelings, interests, talents, perspectives and opinions.

In these relationships, verbal abuse creates pain and trauma and can lead to physical illness. Ongoing abuse is stressful, no matter how much one tries to ignore it. Stress compromises the immune system leaving the abused person vulnerable to a host of illnesses. Back pain and exhaustion are often the first symptoms.

On the other hand, people can occasionally feel so upset or frustrated that they say something that is abusive, but when they realize how they’ve come across they apologize and say what they mean in a non-abusive, healthy, way.

If there isn’t a feeling of goodwill and understanding between two people in their relationship, if one is hurting and feeling constantly put down by actual comments, for instance, “You can’t do anything right,” You aren’t listening,” or is frequently yelled at, then that person is probably in a verbally abusive relationship.

Some people think “You’ve got to learn to take it. Let it roll of your back, it never hurt me. I’m successful.” But one might ask, Does being verbally abused make someone a better, healthier person?

SEPARATED?

If you are separated from your loved one and wonder if there is change, please consider the following case.

A couple separated. Person (A) wondered if person (B) had changed, but realized that (B) had not because of (B)'s relentless pressure exerted on (A) to come back. Never once did (B) ask, "How do you feel? What do you want?"

If you are facing this kind of pressure, it might be helpful to ask yourself if your partner sees you as a separate, real person, and thus asks you questions such as:

- What do you want?
- What bothers you about being around me?
- Do you like constant calls or emails from me?
- How do you feel when you come to the house?
- How do you feel after seeing me?
- What do you envision as best for your future?
- Are you interested in hearing my vision for us again, or do you feel usurped by my constantly telling you how you should be?
- Are you interested in hearing me tell you what I want from you hundreds of times a week?
- Do I sound selfish?
- Have I shown an interest in your reality, experience, hopes, dreams?
• Are you experiencing trauma from the things I said and did for years?
• Do you shake when you see me?
• Can you heal from this trauma?
• Do you believe you could like a person who has been self-centered and abusive for a long time?

The Verbally Abusive Man and His Dream Woman

The verbally abusive man defines his partner (see examples on page one and two of verbally abusive words that define). He has an angry demeanor at home or is very cold and unresponsive. He usually won’t answer a direct question about himself. He rarely, if ever, asks his partner about herself: how she is feeling, what she likes, what bothers her about something. He seems to not really see her. He acts as if he has been assaulted when she tells him that she is unhappy about something. He counters her separate thoughts and opinions.

Most verbally abusive men are not abusive simply because they feel they are privileged or superior to their partner—although some do. And most verbal abusers don’t think that they are trying to dominate and control their partners. Some even think their partners are trying to control them!

Most men who indulge in verbally abusive behavior do so because they feel attacked by their partners. When they feel attacked, they attack back. But why do these men feel attacked? Because their real-life, flesh-and-blood partner—the real woman—shows up in a body where a dream woman was supposed to be.

A dream woman is the personification of the abuser’s unconscious, unintegrated self. For instance, if he wasn’t allowed to cry when he was a little boy, and if he was supposed to be so tough that he didn’t complain if he was physically hurt, he had to block off the pain. (In nearly all cases, the abuser’s father or father figure did not accept his emotions when he was little. He was put down or pushed away or ignored for having natural feelings.) He couldn’t “know” what happened to him. A huge part of him became like a separate self within him. And this separate self became the dream woman. She is composed of all those experiences he didn’t integrate, as well as those qualities, functions, energies, talents and gifts that he never developed (in particular, those qualities that are ascribed to the feminine). The Dream Woman can be thought of as mostly the rest of him.

When the abuser can’t find his dream woman in the real woman’s body, he can’t find the rest of himself. The dream woman accounts for most men’s verbally abusive behavior and for its Jekyll and Hyde quality. The verbal abuser uses anger and abuse to shape and control his partner, to make the real woman be his dream woman.

The real woman is a threat to the verbal abuser. Her existence can seem like an attack. The abuser is threatened by her “separateness” from him. She is no longer an “extension” of him. When the real woman shows up, the verbally abusive man can’t find his dream woman—the part of himself that lives within her.
Most of these men are trying to make their partners into dream women and become angry when they can’t get the real woman to say or do what she is “supposed” to at any given moment. It’s as if they were eradicating their real partner to shape her into the dream one. Although usually unconscious, their attempts to create a new being, a dream woman, are tantamount to placing themselves above God. While attempting to silence the real woman, the verbally abusive man is also trying to make her into “his” own image and likeness, one that thinks what he thinks, wants what he wants, and always knows what he means. Playing God is dangerous. Hence, his changing is essential.

Keep in mind that the verbally abusive man believes he is truly a fine person, and that he often truly believes anything he says is nothing compared to what his partner does to him. What does she do? She, the real woman, shows up and displaces his dream woman (the rest of himself). In his separate reality (which may seem quite crazy or irrational, but makes sense from his perspective), he must maintain his dream woman and his own perfected image to the world, as well as erase the real woman. Therefore, it is about power over and control of his partner. Despite his controlling behavior, he may not see himself as controlling. Instead, he may simply feel attacked by his partner’s separateness and believe he is only responding to an attack. We know that he is not his partner. He is not a woman. He does not live within her. He does not know what she thinks, means, or is. But, he pretends that he is his partner, that he is a woman, when he tells her what she thinks, feels, wants, should know, etc.

Once a man anchors his dream woman in a real woman’s body, verbal abuse is the automatic and expected outcome of a man’s attempts to keep his unlived self—that is, his dream woman—alive. He will tell the real woman how she should be. He will make up reasons for the horrible feeling he has when he can’t find his dream woman, telling the real woman she has done something to him. He will pretend the real woman doesn’t exist by refusing to speak to her. All of this is controlling behavior.

Once we know about the dream woman, his verbally abusive behaviors, although wrong, make more sense. For instance, he walks away while the real woman is talking so he can stay in a dream state with his dream woman. He doesn’t do what he promises to do because he only said “yes, I’ll do it” to shut up the real woman. By not doing it, he can avoid acting like the real woman is real. He acts nicely to everyone else because he hasn’t anchored a dream person in them—he sees them as real people. He gets mad when the real woman tells him what is bothering her because when she is at her most real and most heartfelt, she is also the most displacing of his dream woman. And the real woman’s thoughts are irrelevant since she “should” think what he thinks (his dream woman does because the dream woman is actually him).

He claims the real woman has done and said things that she didn’t say or do because he has to make up a reason for the anger he feels when the real woman shows up. He doesn’t answer direct questions about himself because the dream woman already “knows” him. He unexpectedly cuts the real woman to the bone with a cruel comment because putting her down makes more room in her body for the dream woman. He argues against everything the real woman says because his dream woman and he are of the same mind—his. He doesn’t apologize for his behavior because to him it is nothing compared to the real woman’s audacity to appear as a real woman. To him, her appearance as a real woman where his dream woman is supposed to be is an
attack on him. He gets really, really angry for no clear reason when he can’t find his dream woman; she is the rest of him and he can’t live without her.

---taken from The Verbally Abusive Man: Can He Change? A Woman’s Guide to Deciding Whether to Stay or Go by Patricia Evans (2006)

Verbal Abuse

Kerby Anderson

Introduction

Almost everyone has heard of, or knows of, someone who has been verbally abused. Perhaps you are involved in a verbally abusive relationship. It is also possible that no one even knows your circumstances. Verbal abuse is a kind of battering which doesn't leave evidence comparable to the bruises of physical battering. You (or your friend) may be suffering in silence and isolation.

In this article, I want to tackle this very important issue in an effort to understand this phenomenon and provide answers. Like any area of human action, it begins in the mind and heart. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is." What a person thinks in his mind and heart will be reflected in his words and actions. Verbal abuse and physical abuse result from a world view that is clearly not biblical.

Verbal abuse is often more difficult to see since there are rarely any visible scars unless physical abuse has taken place. But it is often less visible simply because the abuse may always take place in private. The victim of verbal abuse lives in a gradually more confusing realm. In public, the victim is with one person. While in private, the abuser may become a completely different person.

Frequently, the perpetrator of verbal abuse is male and the victim is female, but not always. There are many examples of women who are quite verbally abusive. But for the sake of simplicity of pronouns in this program, I will identify the abuser as male and the victim as female.

One of the first books to describe verbal abuse in adults was Patricia Evan's book The Verbally Abusive Relationship. She interviewed forty verbally abused women who ranged in age from 21 to 66. Most of the women had left a verbally abusive relationship. We will use some of the characteristics and categories of verbal abuse these women describe in this book.

Another important book in understanding verbal abuse is one that describes the phenomenon of "crazymaking." George Bach and Ronald Deutsch wrote Stop! You're Driving Me Crazy. They describe what the crazymaking experience feels like. This includes "feeling temporarily thrown off balance," "feeling lost and not knowing where to turn," and "being caught off guard."
A victim is often the target of angry outbursts, sarcasm, or cool indifference. The abuser's reaction to these actions is frequently cloaked in a "What's wrong with you?" attitude. She is accused of "making a mountain out of a molehill." Over time she loses her balance and equilibrium and begins to wonder if she is the one who is crazy.

The key to healing is to recognize verbal abuse for what it is and to begin to take deliberate steps to stop it and bring healing. Since the abuser is usually in denial, the responsibility for recognizing verbal abuse often rests with the partner who is being abused.

**Characteristics of Verbal Abuse**

Now I would like to focus on some of the characteristics of verbal abuse as outlined in *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*. [3]

1. Verbal abuse is hurtful and usually attacks the nature and abilities of the partner. Over time, the partner may begin to believe that there is something wrong with her or her abilities. She may come to feel that she is the problem, rather than her partner.

2. Verbal abuse may be overt (through angry outbursts and name-calling) or covert (involving very subtle comments, even something that approaches brainwashing). Overt verbal abuse is usually blaming and accusatory, and consequently confusing to the partner. Covert verbal abuse, which is hidden aggression, is even more confusing to the partner. Its aim is to control her without her knowing.

3. Verbal abuse is manipulative and controlling. Even disparaging comments may be voiced in an extremely sincere and concerned way. But the goal is to control and manipulate.

4. Verbal abuse is insidious. The partner's self-esteem gradually diminishes, usually without her realizing it. She may consciously or unconsciously try to change her behavior so as not to upset the abuser.

5. Verbal abuse is unpredictable. In fact, unpredictability is one of the most significant characteristics of verbal abuse. The partner is stunned, shocked, and thrown off balance by her mate's sarcasm, angry jab, put-down, or hurtful comment.

6. Verbal abuse is not a side issue. It is the issue in the relationship. When a couple is having an argument about a real issue, the issue can be resolved. In a verbally abusive relationship, there is no specific conflict. The issue is the abuse, and this issue is not resolved. There is no closure.

7. Verbal abuse expresses a double message. There is incongruence between the way the abuser speaks and his real feelings. For example, he may sound very sincere and honest while he is telling his partner what is wrong with her.

8. Verbal abuse usually escalates, increasing in intensity, frequency, and variety. The verbal abuse may begin with put-downs disguised as jokes. Later other forms might surface. Sometimes
the verbal abuse may escalate into physical abuse, starting with "accidental" shoves, pushes, and bumps.

These are a few characteristics of verbal abuse. Next we will look at some of the categories of verbal abuse.[4]

**Categories of Verbal Abuse**

The first category of verbal abuse is withholding. A marriage requires intimacy, and intimacy requires empathy. If one partner withholds information and feelings, then the marriage bond weakens. The abuser who refuses to listen to his partner denies her experience and leaves her isolated.

The second is countering. This is the dominant response of the verbal abuser who sees his partner as an adversary. He is constantly countering and correcting everything she says and does. Internally he may even be thinking, "How dare she have a different view!"

Countering is very destructive to a relationship because it prevents the partner from knowing what her mate thinks about anything. Sometimes the verbal abuser will cut off discussion in mid-sentence before she can finish her thought. In many ways, he cannot even allow her to have her own thoughts.

A third category of verbal abuse is discounting. This is like taking a one hundred-dollar item and reducing its price to one cent. Discounting denies the reality and experience of the partner and is extremely destructive. It can be a most insidious form of verbal abuse because it denies and distorts the partner's actual perception of the abuse.

Sometimes verbal abuse is disguised as jokes. Although his comments may masquerade as humor, they cut the partner to the quick. The verbal jabs may be delivered crassly or with great skill, but they all have the same effect of diminishing the partner and throwing her off balance.

A fifth form of verbal abuse is blocking and diverting. The verbal abuser refuses to communicate, establishes what can be discussed, or withholds information. He can prevent any possibility of resolving conflicts by blocking and diverting.

Accusing and blaming is another form. A verbal abuser will accuse his partner of some wrongdoing or some breach of the basic agreement of the relationship. This has the effect of diverting the conversation and putting the other partner on the defensive.

Another form of verbal abuse is judging and criticizing. The verbal abuser may judge his partner and then express his judgment in a critical way. If she objects, he may tell her that he is just pointing something out to be helpful, but in reality he is expressing his lack of acceptance of her.

These are just a few of the categories of verbal abuse. Next we will look at a number of other forms of verbal abuse.
Other Forms of Verbal Abuse

Trivializing can also be a form of verbal abuse. It is an attempt to take something that is said or done and make it insignificant. When this is done in a frank and sincere manner, it can be difficult to detect. Often the partner becomes confused and believes she hasn't effectively explained to her mate how important certain things are to her.

Undermining is also verbal abuse. The abuser not only withholds emotional support, but also erodes confidence and determination. The abuser often will squelch an idea or suggestion just by a single comment.

Threatening is a classic form of verbal abuse. He manipulates his partner by bringing up her biggest fears. This may include threatening to leave or threatening to get a divorce. In some cases, the threat may be to escalate the abuse.

Name-calling can also be verbal abuse. Continually calling someone "stupid" because she isn't as intelligent as you or calling her a "klutz" because she is not as coordinated can have a devastating effect on the partner's self esteem.

Verbal abuse may also involve forgetting. This may involve both overt and covert manipulation. Everyone forgets things from time to time, but the verbal abuser consistently does so. After the partner collects herself, subsequent to being yelled at, she may confront her mate only to find that he has "forgotten" about the incident. Some abusers consistently forget about the promises they have made which are most important to their partners.

Ordering is another classic form of verbal abuse. It denies the equality and autonomy of the partner. When an abuser gives orders instead of asking, he treats her like a slave or subordinate.

Denial is the last category of verbal abuse. Although all forms of verbal abuse have serious consequences, denial can be very insidious because it denies the reality of the partner. In fact, a verbal abuser could read over this list of categories and insist that he is not abusive.

That is why it is so important for the partner to recognize these characteristics and categories since the abuser is usually in denial. Thus, the responsibility for recognizing verbal abuse and doing something about it often rests with the partner.

We have described various characteristics of verbal abuse and have even discussed the various categories of verbal abuse. Finally, I would like to provide a biblical perspective.

A Biblical Perspective of Verbal Abuse

The Bible clearly warns us about the dangers of an angry man. Proverbs 22:24 says, "Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man." And Proverbs 29:22 says, "An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression."
It is not God's will for you (or your friend) to be in a verbally abusive relationship. Those angry and critical words will destroy your confidence and self-esteem. Being submissive in a marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:22) does not mean allowing yourself to be verbally beaten by your partner. 1 Peter 3:1 does teach that wives, by being submissive to their husbands, may win them to Christ by their behavior. But it does not teach that they must allow themselves to be verbally or physically abused.

Here are some key biblical principles. First, know that God loves you. The Bible teaches, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

Second, deal with your feelings of guilt. You may be feeling that the problems in your marriage are your fault. "If only I would do better, he wouldn't be so angry with me." The Bible teaches in Psalm 51:6 that "Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place." Even though you may have feelings of guilt, you may not be the guilty party.

A related issue is shame. You may feel that something is wrong with you. You may feel that you are a bad person. Psalms 139:14 says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Finally, you should realize that you can be free from being a victim and agree with God that you can be free. 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

A key element in this area of verbal abuse will no doubt be confrontation of the abuser. It's important for you to realize that confrontation is a biblical principle. Jesus taught about this in Matthew 18:15-20. I would recommend that you seek help from a pastor or counselor. But I would also recommend that you gather godly men and women together who can lovingly confront the person who is verbally abusing you. Their goal should be to break through his denial and lovingly restore him with a spirit of gentleness (Galatians 6:1).

Verbal abuse is a difficult emotional problem, but there is hope if the abuser is willing to confront his sin and get help.

Notes
3. Evans, 81-84.
4. Ibid., 85-104.

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CONTROLLING PEOPLE

Patricia Evans has developed a wonderful and plausible theory as to why certain people are compelled to control others.

All people have four internal functions available to them to use as internal guidance: their ability to think, their emotions, their physical sensations and their intuition.

Controlling people (CPs) have suffered some kind of emotional or physical trauma as children or adults that has caused them, as a defense, to shut down one or more of the first three functions. Oftentimes, the only function they use is their thinking function. This leaves them feeling empty inside. And it's a tough way to live.

For this reason, they are attracted to "four functioning" people. Once they feel secure with another person, CPs project their idea of a perfect person into the other person (a verbally abusive husband projects his “dream woman” into the body of his real wife, and then gets furious when the real woman shows up with her own opinions, wants, desires, feelings, etc.) CPs don't see the person for who she/he really is.

People can tell when they're in the presence of a CP because they will be defined by the CP (for example, "you're not hungry!") as if the CP can know another person's internal reality. They will not be listened to, the conversation will frequently make no sense, and the CP will most likely be verbally abusive.

CPs see others much as children see their teddy bears: the perfect friend who knows exactly what the CP is thinking, who never talks backs or disagrees and who has no separate needs of their own.

CPs build their sense of sense of self from the outside in--not the inside out as is normal. Their personalities are constructs created by themselves to win the love and admiration they seek. They don't come from a place of deep authenticity. They have no sense of themselves. They need to anchor inside another person. Without that anchor in another, they feel lost and adrift, almost as if they are going to die. That's why the compulsion to control is so strong. That's why their reaction to someone who disagrees with them, or who in anyway doesn't fulfill the teddy bear role, can be so extreme and vicious.

The horrible irony for the CP is that their behavior pushes away the love and connection they so desperately need.

The horrible reality for victims of CPs is that they blame themselves, think they are crazy, constantly try to explain themselves to no avail, and think that if they just try harder, all will be well. But it never is.
People who are controlling seem to have a pervasive fear of abandonment. They, the "pretenders", have an idealistic idea of how someone should be if they love and care for them. In their minds they create a pretend person or "teddy" or “dream woman” and continually try to anchor that imaginary figure into a real person such as their spouse, children, friends, or employees.

Pretenders feel comforted when their "teddy" behaves in a way that is not separate from how they think "teddy" should act. Their "teddy" is someone who is there just for them and is someone who would never leave them.

Pretenders have been “undergone a long training of disconnection” from their emotions. They have successfully learned to close the gate on their own feelings, sensations, and intuitions. They make themselves up according to what they think they are, having learned to deny their own wisdom and having taken in other people's definitions of them, without even realizing it.

Instead of learning to cope with the fear of abandonment, pretenders have established a "backwards connection” with other people. They try to "define their spouses, even in subtle ways, they are pretending to know the unknowable".

When "teddy" or “dream woman” begins to show signs of separateness (perhaps by expressing her own opinion, or asking a question), CPs will resort to any method necessary to keep the illusion that their "teddy" or “dream woman” still exists within that person. "Millions of people try to defend themselves from abuse and describe the altercations as arguments. Are they? I think not" says author Patricia Evans. "I see them more as a struggle to retain ones’ own reality when someone else has stepped into it.” 1

**Creating Teddy using Coercive Persuasion**

In order to anchor “teddy” or the “dream woman” into the body of the real person, pretenders must use methods such as coercive persuasion in which cause “cause the learning and adoption of an ideology or designated set of beliefs, ideas, attitudes, or behaviors.” 3

What amazes me is that pretenders are not always aware that they are utilizing these tactics. They are essentially "beside themselves". "Commonly people who are beside themselves try to take control of what's "out there" in any way they can. They have lost inner connection, so they try to get a grip on something, anything even someone. When people are in this state, we not only say they are beside themselves, we may also say that they don't know what they are doing." 3

"Consequently, they do try to get a grip on someone else just as they would do in a crisis. This is a way of being grounded when they aren't grounded in themselves. I have asked hundreds of "pretenders" if they recall what they said when they had defined someone. Most could not clearly remember. They seemed unaware of their own reality while they simultaneously acted as if they knew the reality of another person.” says Patricia Evans.

**How Pretenders try to keep the Illusion**
"Anytime the witness (teddy) seems to be authentic, separate, and real, the controller experiences a threat to the Control Connection and reacts to the threat by doing everything possible to silence all signs of separateness" says Patricia Evans. Pretenders will often resort to "emotionally abusive behaviors, which can include criticism, humiliation, isolation, threats of abandonment, threats of harm witness (teddy), children or their friends or family, exploitation and financial control." 2 In other words, when the real person shows up, the abusive person does whatever he can to avoid having to acknowledge and interact with the real, separate person.

1 Controlling People, Patricia Evans 2001

2 Wearing Her Down: Understanding And Responding To Emotional Abuse, By Cheryl Champagne (Excerpt from Wearing Her Down: Understanding And Responding To Emotional Abuse. Toronto, ON: Education Wife Assault, 1999. To order the full document online, click on Publications)
http://www.womanabuseprevention.com/html/wearing_her_down.html

Below is an interesting Amazon review on Patricia Evan's book from a verbally abused woman:

I am not crazy after all! I would have never thought to categorize my boyfriend as verbally abusive at all. After all, I had never been in an abusive relationship, so little did I know. I came to understand though that he was very abusive in his behavior toward me. Ms. Evans talks about how the abuser/controller connects in a 'backwards' way, not in a healthy direct respectful manner at all. They will say and do things to make you doubt yourself and there is even a name for that; it's called "crazy-making" behavior. The reason they connect in a 'backwards' way goes back to their family of origin (doesn't everything?). Examine this scenario: say little Johnny falls down and skins his knee when he is a child. His knee is cut and bleeding and he's crying. Mommie though (or daddy) pick up him and say to him-- "you're not hurt, you're just being a baby, now get up and let's get going," or some words to that affect. Right away little Johnny begins to 'doubt' his inner feelings and denies them-- because mommie says so. Hmmm, he thought his knee hurt but does it? Maybe he's wrong. We all have this 'intuition' or gut feeling, but mommie says different. Life goes on and other occurrences in Johnny's life like this happen from time to time. He may feel sad, hurt, angry, but mommie and daddy say-- you have nothing to cry about, you're a big boy, etc. So, the kid cannot even identify what he really "feels" because somehow it must be 'fake' or not 'real'-- right? That's what his parents tell him. He never gets any validation or recognition for anything in his life. All his life growing up he just wants their love and approval, so he will do anything to obtain it. Sound familiar?

Then little Johnny grows up and starts dating a woman. He starts to get close and develop intimacy maybe, but he gets scared and backs away because he can't 'trust' his feelings. That's what happened in my case anyhow-- that I met this wonderful man who treated me like I was so special and could hardly wait to see me, talk to me, and then slowly his behavior started changing toward me. He may feel sad, hurt, angry, but mommie and daddy say-- you have nothing to cry about, you're a big boy, etc. So, the kid cannot even identify what he really "feels" because somehow it must be 'fake' or not 'real'-- right? That's what his parents tell him. He never gets any validation or recognition for anything in his life. All his life growing up he just wants their love and approval, so he will do anything to obtain it. Sound familiar?
denies responsibility for his behavior and will instead put it back on you with blaming, judging, criticizing, etc.

If there is a relationship, then there must be more than the exchange of information. The relationship requires intimacy also. It requires good-will, listening, being supportive, but he instead would "withhold" or discount, be verbally abusive disguised as jokes, undermining, trivializing, and a whole gamut of other things. When one is in a relationship like this and there is no mutual sharing one's spirit is broken, and before you know it you are under 'their spell.'

More on the book... he wants his 'Teddy'
Yep, as in teddy bear! You wanna' know why? Because they don't talk back. They don't have a mind of their own; they have no opinions, thoughts, ideas, Teddy is always there for him. It's in the mind's eye illusion of the controller that Teddy is the 'perfect' woman. Another characteristic of backwards connection is that you have no identity, no individuality, hence the connection with Teddy who is always there. The controller is Mr. Nice Guy to his friends, co-workers, and family, but not to his partner/mate because that involves intimacy (knowing his partner on a deeper, feeling level) which of course for him is impossible because he does not trust his own feelings. How can he? He does not know himself, because remember what mommie said when he fell down and skinned his knee?

Breaking the "Spell"
It does you no good to continually defend yourself against a controller by saying... I meant to say this or do that, because he will always come back with his own way of "justifying." Remember, he does not hear you because you have no identity. You are not real to him. One of the most powerful words you can say to him when he is putting you down, telling you that you don't know what you are talking about, you are wrong, or stupid, or you are reading way too much into my words is to say STOP or What???. Remember, you define yourself, you know yourself better than anybody else does. He has deluded himself into thinking that you would ever leave him because he may tell you over and over that he loves you, buy you things, and promise to change his behavior, but in most cases he will not unless he is willing to take responsibility for his behavior and make some changes. That may require therapy of course-- venturing into completely new territory.

Final Thoughts
I am writing this review to let you know that you are not "crazy" if whatever you do or say, he cuts you down, if you never receive a compliment-- even after making countless attempts for you to save the relationship or the marriage. No one deserves to be ignored, talked down to, or walk on egg shells. No one defines your thoughts, feelings, ideas, or dreams but you. I should have seen the 'flags' on even our first meeting for breakfast; I had this 'gut' feeling then that he was a little too self-absorbed... hmmm, like when I asked him when was his birthday but he didn't ask me, when I asked him about his favorite color but he didn't ask me, when I asked him... but he didn't ask me. Sadly, the person who is controlling and abusive may not even be aware of it. He probably wants and needs love too, as we all do, but may never change because he lives in a world of make-believe.