

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.

She 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.

She 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.

She 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.

She 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.

She 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.

She 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.

She 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.

She 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.

She 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

She 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.

She 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."

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.”

She 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)