

Obstacles and indicators of verbal abuse
From The Verbally Abusive Relationship by Patricia Evans

1. The partner has learned to overlook unkindness, disrespect, disregard, and indifference as not important enough to stand up to.
2. Upsetting incidents are denied by the abuser, and the partner thinks she's wrong.
3. Verbal abuse, control, and manipulation have not been articulated or defined for the partner, so she remains confused.
4. The partner thinks her feelings are wrong.
5. The partner intermittently forgets her upset feelings when the abuser is intermittently friendly.
6. The abuse can be very subtle--the control increasing gradually over time so that the partner gradually adapts to it.
7. The abuser controls the interpersonal communication and, therefore, the interpersonal reality by refusing to discuss upsetting interactions.
8. The abuser blames the partner for upsetting interactions, and the partner believes him and therefore thinks that they are her fault.
9. The partner has no basis of comparison--no experience of nonabusive relationships with men.
10. The abuser and partner may function very well together in their respective roles, making a home, raising a family, and "getting ahead," so the abusive nature of the relationship is overlooked.
11. The partner may be so absorbed in raising a family or developing a career that she ignores problems in the relationship, thinking that nothing is perfect anyway.
12. The partner may have never seen a model of a healthy relationship and good communication.
13. At times, the abuser is not abusive. Consequently, the partner forgets the "bad times". The partner is too stunned or thrown off balance to think clearly about what is happening to her.

14. The partner does not have the level of self-esteem which demands that she always be treated with courtesy and dignity.
15. The partner's reality has never been validation. Others don't see the abuse, so it doesn't seem real to her.
16. The partner believes her mate is rational in his behavior toward her, so that he has "some reason" for what he says.
17. The abuser's behavior is alternately abusive and non-abusive, so that the partner is never sure whether or not the relationship is working.
18. The partner believes her perceptions are wrong.
19. The partner may have no knowledge of verbal abuse and no appropriate models of better relationships to which she can compare her own relationship.
20. The partner may believe that the way her mate is, is the way men are, with possibly a few exceptions.
21. The partner may believe that if her mate provides for her he really loves her.
22. The partner thinks there is something wrong with her.
23. The partner believes that when her mate is angry she has somehow hurt him.
24. The partner may never have considered the question, "Am I being verbally abused".