HEAL FIRST
COACHING

HEAL FIRST COACHING · FREEGUIDE

How to Know You're in a Toxic Relationship

A gentle checklist to help you trust what you're feeling

If you've been quietly asking yourself whether something is wrong, that question already matters. Toxic dynamics are confusing from the inside — the good moments make the hard ones easy to explain away. This isn't a diagnosis. It's a mirror, so you can see your own patterns clearly and start trusting yourself again.

HOW YOU FEEL

- [ ] I feel like I'm constantly walking on eggshells around them
- [ ] I've stopped trusting my own memory or read of a situation
- [ ] I feel drained, anxious, or "not myself" after time together
- [ ] I feel lonelier with them than I do on my own
- [ ] My confidence has quietly gotten smaller since this began

HOW YOU'RE TREATED

- [ ] My needs, feelings, or boundaries get minimized or dismissed
- [ ] I get blamed for things that aren't mine to carry
- [ ] Warmth and affection seem to depend on my behavior
- [ ] Criticism feels personal, not just about the issue at hand
- [ ] Apologies happen, but nothing actually changes afterward

THE PATTERN

- [ ] Conflict follows a familiar shape: tension builds, something erupts, then a "honeymoon" phase smooths it over
- [ ] I find myself defending behavior I'd never accept from someone else
- [ ] Things feel good just often enough to keep me holding on and hoping

> **It's the cycle, not just the moments**
> Toxic relationships are rarely one bad day — they're a repeating loop of tension, rupture, and repair that keeps you hoping *this time* it will stick. Seeing the shape of the cycle is the first step out of it.

If several of these felt uncomfortably familiar, that's information, not judgment. It doesn't mean you did something wrong, and it doesn't automatically mean the relationship is over. It means the pattern deserves a closer look — with clear eyes, and without waiting for it to get bad enough to be "sure."

Naming the pattern is just the beginning
Toxic Relationship Recovery course is a 3-part training focused on your healing — not on cataloging someone else's behavior. It's a gentle, guided path back to yourself: rebuilding trust in your own voice, restoring your confidence, and taking real steps toward the peace you deserve.

Visit HealFirstCoaching.com and click Online Course

If you ever feel unsafe, you don't have to figure this out alone. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is free and confidential, 24/7: 1-800-799-7233 or thehotline.org.