

Warning signs are just that—"SIGNS"— they need to be paid attention to for they may, and often do, foretell the attitudes, fears, and future behavior of people. Relationships develop along well-defined paths based upon people's internal process.. You can predict many problems if you know what to look for in your, and other people's attitudes & fears.

Being "madly in love" is a normal part of learning about making grown-up bonds. Learning how to deal with jealousy and possessiveness are part of the normal "learning curve" for young people in love. Pay attention to "Signs" of control-struggles. Your dignity is at risk. You must protect your dignity, they may not.

We do not "own" another person. "Ownership" does not make up for our inability to take care of ourselves emotionally. Name-calling is a power play. Initially it will show whether or not John can "get away with" dominating Mary. Mary then does Victim, apologies, assumes the subservient position. John "makes nice".

Mary has friends but John wants Mary at his beck and call. Now he escalates to physical violence. Mary again does Victim and apologizes, promises to always ask permission, sending the message that she can and will be dominated. John thought that Mary "deserved it", but felt bad, and then starts to isolate Mary to generate more control.

Now Mary is "caught" breaking the rules generated to hide John's fears. Now Mary is lying to cover the reality that she is in a violent, abusive, and very scary relationship. She has effectively isolated herself. She has cut herself off from friends and family. Now she is emotionally dependent upon John – and she is getting very scared – but takes no action to ensure her personal safety.

The lack of healthy boundaries escalates to a full-blown emergency room visit. Now Mary's parents are in the loop.

(Friends already know by gossip !)

Will this make a major difference in how John or Mary deal with future relationships? Probably not. People often break up only to repeat the pattern with someone who looks "different" but acts the same after the "honeymoon" is over.

WITHOUT CHANGE, THE DYSFUNCTIONAL CYCLE OF DOMINANCE AND SUBMISSION CAN CONTINUE FOR A LIFETIME OF MISERY – OFTEN WITH MANY PARTNERS.



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**

"Mary and John have been going together for one year. Her friends think Mary is the luckiest girl in school to have such a cool boyfriend who treats her so well. John and Mary are inseparable. They never go anywhere without the other person—unless John wants to "hang out" with his friends. Mary thinks that John must love her a lot because he is so jealous when other boys look at her.

Four months into the relationship John and Mary had a "major" fight because his friends make suggestive comments about an outfit that she wore to the basketball game. John called Mary many degrading names and forbid her to dress that way again. Mary accepted the blame for the argument and agreed to dress differently. John apologized for the name calling and was extra nice to Mary for the next month or so—buying her little gifts and spending lots of time with her.

Six months into the relationship Mary went to the movies and out for pizza with her girlfriends without telling John first. John became very angry and this time their fight involved pushing, shoving, and John slapped Mary. Mary again thought that she was wrong and apologized to John and made the promise that she would never do it again. John felt bad about getting "rough" with Mary even if she did deserve it. John began to use his influence with Mary to end her relationship with her girlfriends. He also started accusing her of being interested in other guys.

Eight months into the relationship John "caught" Mary talking to a new boy at school. Again the fight turned physical and Mary ended up with bruises on her arms and a black eye. She told her parents that she fell during PE. Mary began to feel trapped in the relationship but did not know how to get out. Her friends were no longer talking to her, and she was not sure if her family would believe her if she told them how John was really was. Her parents really liked him, and he went out of his way to appear as the "all American boy" when he was around them.

Last week John and Mary went to a party where a lot of alcohol was consumed. John accused Mary of flirting with all the guys at the party and beat her up baldly. One of John's friends broke up the fight and took Mary to the emergency room. Mary's parents were called and Mary was admitted to the hospital with internal injuries, broken ribs, and a concussion.

This sad, but all too common tale illustrates

**John as HOSTILE-DEPENDENT
Mary as PASSIVE-DEPENDENT**

This is the dramatic, 3rd degree version of many common occurrences between people who have low self-esteem, are fearful most of the time, and cover fear with hostility or passivity. Establishing who is "boss" makes John feel better for a short time and Mary feel "loved" and "important" for a short time. Neither lasts for long. There is no durability over time. They have no method to generate stable love and respect.