

One of the big questions from victims of abuse, is whether their abuser will change. The list below can help you identify behaviours that have or haven't changed, so you can make your own assessment about any changes.

How to tell that the abuser is changing

- Acknowledges and accepts responsibility for what s/he's done, fully acknowledges that s/he used abuse to control you and that it was wrong, and isn't blaming you, other people, stress, the job, or any other outside circumstances for his/her choices.
- S/he is no longer denying it, making light of it, or making excuses for it. S/he acknowledges that s/he chose to behave this way instead of saying that other people made him/her do it, or that s/he can't control him/herself.
- S/he fully understands and acknowledges that what s/he did was wrong. S/he admits lies and is no longer making up stories to make him/herself look better.
- S/he understands that recovery from abusiveness takes a long time and s/he'll have to work at it.
- S/he understands fully that you (and your children) have been hurt by what s/he's done, and the ways in which you've been hurt.
- S/he will talk about it with you in depth about how you feel, your fear, your hurt, your anger, your rights, your lack of trust for him/her and understands fully that it is his/her behaviour that has caused it.
- When you express anger at him/her, s/he listens instead of getting angry and trying to shout you down, threatening you or trying to convince you that something's wrong with you for feeling that way.
- S/he is sorry for what s/he's done, and is working hard to overcome the damage s/he's done; and is actively making up for it by giving you back what is rightfully yours – money, rights, freedoms, choices, etc.

- S/he understands that you're an equal human being, and s/he's not superior to you.
- S/he stops interfering in your friendships and family relationships and you can re-establish and repair these and make new friends.
- S/he stops monitoring your movements, demanding to know where you are and who's there.
- S/he stops expecting sex on demand.
- S/he is no longer blocking communication, s/he listens and respects what you have to say. You can express yourself, speak freely and feel safe doing so.
- If s/he tries to control you, you can point it out and s/he'll stop.
- S/he is not putting you down, trying to convince you your perception is off, that you're crazy, that you're stupid, etc.
- S/he is making a big effort to be non-abusive.

How to tell that the abuser is not changing

- S/he says: "I can't change unless you do." Which means that s/he's trying to get you to agree to give up your rights and freedoms in exchange for not abusing you. Also stated as "I've changed, but you aren't changing"; "I'm not the only one who needs help".
- S/he tries to get sympathy from you, family members, and friends.
- S/he is still lying to you, the children, your family or other people about what s/he's done.
- S/he won't acknowledge that it was wrong. S/he doesn't seem sorry that s/he did it, but only seems sorry that s/he has suffered some consequences for it.
- S/he refuses to let the subject of his/her abuse come up or gets angry when it does.
- S/he plays victim.
- S/he says: "How could you do this to me.?"
- S/he is overly charming, always trying to remind you of all the good times you had together and ignore the bad.
- S/he will not get help or says s/he will get, but never does.

There may be many other things to look out for. You are welcome to contact the [Respect Phonenumber](#) to discuss your concerns, so you can decide whether your abusive partner is changing or not.