

## **Neediness cycles ...and how to break free**

*I've been dating a guy for four years. The first year was complete bliss but then things went rapidly downhill. He became very possessive and controlling, constantly demanding to know where I was and who I was with. We argued a lot and he sometimes 'accidentally' hurt me but was always very sorry afterwards. I tried to break up several times but he always convinced me to go back. Finally, I just gave up and agreed to marry him. I've told him he scares me and he promises he'll get counselling. I don't know how to be with him, but it hurts too much emotionally when I try to leave.*

—Angie

Dear Angie

Your partner is being abusive and you're accepting it in the name of love. But there's nothing loving about control, manipulation or abuse, and we only tolerate such things if we have low self-worth. Once you realize that it's your low self-worth that caused you to attract an abusive, controlling partner in the first place, it makes no sense to focus on him. Addressing your lack of worthiness is the key to getting the kind of loving partner you want.

Things tend to get progressively worse if you don't get the message and start putting yourself first. So try to see this relationship for what it is: a wake-up call designed to put you back in charge of you. You have the right to choose what's best for you but, at some point in your upbringing, you missed out on the love and emotional reassurance you needed in order to feel worthy of being loved. As a result, you believe you deserve no better than what you've got—which is why you're trying desperately to make this work, even though it's not even what you want.

If your partner is being physically abusive, you must leave. We know it takes two to tango, but it only takes one to break negative cycles like this. Say no to this abuse and start putting your own needs first. You don't have to suffer emotional bullying from anyone. In fact, the whole purpose of this relationship is for you to learn to say no to anything less than love. When you trust yourself and say *NO* with conviction, your partner won't try to change your mind again. He won't be *able* to.

You cannot love someone you fear. And if you are afraid of this man, why would you want to marry him? Ask yourself why you'd put up with pain, heartache, abuse, dysfunction and a whole lot less love, respect and acceptance than you really want. There's no good reason to do so. Our sense of unworthiness is the only thing that keeps us stuck in painful, unfulfilling relationships.

So stand your ground; be true to your heart and don't settle for anything less than a truly loving partner who celebrates who you are and supports you in being you.

*Olga Sheean is a relationship coach and therapist who specialises in addressing the negative subconscious programming that runs—and often ruins—our lives. She is the author of *Fit for Love—find your self and your perfect mate, the ultimate guide to healthy, loving relationships and personal empowerment*. [www.olgasheean.com](http://www.olgasheean.com)*