Psychological Abuse

BINGO

Asks a question and doesn't let you answer it	Speaks in absolutes: *always, never, everything, nothing*	Claims no one loves or cares about you more than they do	Would die for you / jump off a bridge for you
Conflates respect with compliance	**Polarizing opinions with no room for nuance**	**Character attacks: *You're a bad person if you don't comply***	**Demands access to your children**
Your feelings are wrong	Weaponizes therapy-language	**Claims you impact their health**	"You should be ashamed"
Calls you immature / tells you to grow up	**Predicts that you will misbehave or lash out**	Embellishes the good parts of the relationship	**"I won't be around much longer" (uses the threat of regret)**

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Connect with a therapist who understands the messy, complex, overwhelming dynamics of emotionally abusive relationships, and believes YOU

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Psychological Abuse is ROOTED IN CONTEMPT

Asks a question and doesn't let you answer it	An impossible-to-answer question is quickly followed by an accusation (e.g., "Can I ask you something? How dare you even..."). They aren't asking to understand, they are likely assuming intent and punishing you for it. **Healthy problem-solving** requires both participants to understand and respect the other's point of view even if they disagree, which means asking constructive questions that CAN be answered and understood.
Speaks in absolutes: *always, never, everything, nothing*	Factually incorrect, serving only to intensify negative feelings and dismiss all evidence to the contrary, pushing solutions further away. **Healthy problem-solving** occurs when issues and solutions can be clearly identified, and participants describe the situation without exaggerating or minimizing (e.g., "the last 2 or 3 times this has happened," "sometimes.")
I'd die for you / jump off a bridge for you / you'll regret this when I'm gone	**Irrelevant emotional blackmail.** **Healthy problem-solving** requires discussion grounded in reality, mutual respect, and focusing on the actual problem at hand.
Claims no one loves or cares about you more than they do	Implies that their strong feelings about you means you owe them something, undermines your own assessment of your support system, attacks your self-esteem, seeks to isolate you. **Healthy problem-solving** respects the autonomy of each individual and *builds* their support system, rather than disparaging it.
Character attacks: *You're a bad person*	Exploits your desire to be a good person by accusing you of being bad or wrong if you do not comply with their wishes. **Healthy problem solving** allows each participant to weigh the options and make thoughtful decisions based on what they value.

For more information, see our resources at
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