



## 10 Signs You Might Be Dating A Sociopath

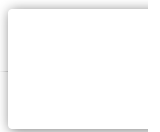
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# 10 Signs You Might Be Dating A Sociopath

*"They're not always so easy to recognize. They can appear to be the guy next door."*

**By Kelsey Borresen**

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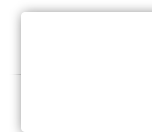
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When [you're in love](#), it's easy to gloss over some of your partner's less flattering traits. But if your [gut tells you something](#) might really be off with this person, don't write off those feelings — especially if you suspect they could be a sociopath.

“Sociopaths don't look like the Joker and show up cackling and howling and ready to manipulate,” [criminologist Scott Bonn](#) told HuffPost.

“They're not always so easy to recognize. They can appear to be the guy next door. And until you get to know them, you wouldn't necessarily know



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So what is a sociopath exactly? Characteristics include a persistent disregard for right and wrong, a tendency to lie and manipulate others, a lack of empathy and remorse, emotional volatility, an inflated ego, and engaging in impulsive and irresponsible behavior.

And though the label is frequently used in the media and pop culture, it's not actually a clinical term. The closest clinical diagnosis would be [antisocial personality disorder](#), which is characterized by a [pattern of disregarding or violating social norms, laws and the rights of others](#) without remorse – not just being a loner, as the name might suggest. It's estimated that roughly [3 percent of men and 1 percent of women](#) meet the criteria for antisocial personality disorder.

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article, prefer to use the term **psycopath** instead. Some use **sociopath** and **psychopath** interchangeably to describe a person with [a more extreme case of antisocial personality disorder](#). Others, like Bonn, contend that [sociopaths and psychopaths are similar](#), but [differ in some key ways](#) – for example, sociopaths lack empathy but are capable of it, while psychopaths are incapable of it altogether.

Below, Bonn and other experts share some of the red flags that might indicate the person you're dating is actually a sociopath.

## 1. They're extremely controlling.

“You begin to detect that your partner is excessively controlling, dictating when, where, what time and under what circumstances you're going to get together,” said Bonn, author of [Why We Love Serial Killers](#). “They attempt to manipulate your behavior and control who your friends are and your activities.”

## 2. They're charming, but in a superficial way.

“There's something glib about their charm,” [Dr. Igor Galynker](#), associate chairman for research in the department of psychiatry at [New York City's Mount Sinai Hospital](#), told HuffPost. “There's no depth to it. It can be turned on and off.”

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“They are that man or woman at a club or at a bar who just seems to be paying you too much attention and is too solicitous. However, you quite like the attention,” [criminologist David Wilson](#) told HuffPost. “That’s the thing about psychopaths: They can at first be fun to be around, and so you get drawn in. They need to do this, as they are later going to use you and all the information that they have extracted from you during this courting phase. They establish a closeness only in as much as it is useful to them.”

#### 4. They have volatile mood swings.

“This person might have unexpected, unstable and abrupt mood swings,” Bonn said. “You say something and suddenly they go into rage.”

“A sociopath likes to control and manipulate. So if they thought their ability to control was being threatened, that might send them into a tizzy,” he added.

#### 5. They prey on your good qualities.

“People with sociopathic tendencies are accustomed to lying, so it’s not as hard for them to fake feelings. Some sociopaths are skilled at pretending they’re wounded and hurt,” [Dr. Stephen Snyder](#) — a sex and relationship therapist in New York City and author of [Love Worth Making](#) — told

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neered and maternal and vulnerable to wanting to care for someone who's been emotionally hurt.”

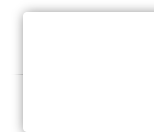
## 6. Their professions of love feel false and hollow.

“They often will say things like, ‘You’re the girl I’ve always wanted.’ Or, ‘I couldn’t be luckier to find someone like you.’ Sort of pat, trope, cliché expressions, as if they heard that in a movie and they’re merely repeating it,” clinical psychologist and relationship expert [Seth Meyers](#) told HuffPost. “They are professions of love and caring that do not feel genuine. Something about it feels off. They do not feel emotions in the same way that regular people do. What they do is see others express emotions in real life or on TV and then they mimic them.”

## 7. They may have a criminal past and refuse to take any responsibility for those misdeeds.

“Particularly if they tell you there was a criminal past but say, ‘It’s not my fault. They just did it to me. I happened to be in wrong place and I was blamed.’” Galynker said.

## 8. They don’t have many friends or close relationships.



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or past relationships and very overly guarded and evasive, Bonn said. “And if they get irritated when you probe them about it, that could be a bad sign.”

## **9. They treat you or others with contempt and cruelty.**

“You might also want to observe not just how they treat you, but how they treat other people in the room,” Snyder said. “Sometimes you’ll catch them behaving heartlessly to someone when they don’t know you’re watching.”

## **10. They’re constantly making messes that you’re left to clean up.**

“There would be regular crises in your life related to money going missing, or other relationships with family or friends breaking down,” Wilson said. “This is because the psychopath prioritizes his or her needs and enjoys risk-taking and sensation-seeking behavior. You would be left to clean up the mess.”

