





What Upsets a Sociopath? 5 Things That Make Them Furious

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 [Janey Davies, B.A. \(Hons\) \(https://www.learning-mind.com/author/janey/\)](https://www.learning-mind.com/author/janey/)  August 13, 2020  8 mins read

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If you are anything like me, then you are fascinated by **deviant minds**. For as long as I can remember, I have always been drawn to the darker side of humanity. I've wanted to know why certain people are capable of doing terrible things.

Nowadays, we have terms for these kinds of people. They are described as psychopaths and sociopaths. The problem is, people who have these types of antisocial tendencies are typically charming and manipulative. This makes it very difficult to spot them in the first place. However, there is one way we can distinguish them, and that is by examining **what upsets a sociopath**.

It's easy to think of people like Ted Bundy, Jeffery Dahmer, and Ed Gein when we imagine sociopaths. Films such as Silence of the Lambs, The Shining, and Se7en perpetuate these stereotypes. Prominent FBI profilers write books and [checklists \(https://www.learning-mind.com/hare-psychopathy-checklist/\)](https://www.learning-mind.com/hare-psychopathy-checklist/) in order to gain a better insight into the deranged mind of psychopaths and sociopaths.

As a result, I've even learned to distinguish between the two. In fact, when it comes to understanding what upsets a sociopath, it's quite interesting to define

the differences between psychopaths and sociopaths (<https://www.learning-mind.com/what-is-the-difference-between-a-psychopath-and-a-sociopath/>).

Differences between Psychopaths and Sociopaths

Psychopaths

- Cold and calculating
- Calm and measured under pressure
- Are able to maintain the pretence of a normal, working life
- Can have relationships, but they are fake and meaningless
- Manipulative and charming
- [Lack of empathy](https://www.learning-mind.com/lack-empathy-people-examples/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/lack-empathy-people-examples/>) or remorse
- Do not understand other people's distress

Sociopaths

- Impulsive and hot-headed
- Stressed when under pressure
- Cannot maintain a normal working life
- Can have relationships, but they find them difficult to maintain
- Prone to over-the-top [outbursts and rage](https://www.learning-mind.com/what-is-narcissistic-rage/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/what-is-narcissistic-rage/>)
- They know what they are doing is wrong but seek to rationalise their behaviour
- Understand other people's distress but do not care

Of course, both of these anti-social personality types will undoubtedly share some [dark triad](https://www.learning-mind.com/dark-triad-traits/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/dark-triad-traits/>) characteristics. However, for this article, I'm interested in what upsets a sociopath.

Now, of course, not all sociopaths are bloodthirsty killers. It's easier to think that people can have one or two **sociopathic traits**. In fact, think of a sociopathic scale, with mild characteristics at one end and full-blown sociopathic traits at the other.

Just like psychopaths, sociopaths are known to be manipulative and charming. Indeed, this is how many of us are drawn to them in the first place.



Yet, this charm (<https://www.learning-mind.com/psychopathy-charm-intelligence/>) is merely superficial and shallow. It is a mask the sociopath uses to beguile and engage us. Much like the fictional character **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**, the sociopath has two sides to their personality.

However, having two sides to your personality is not the most frightening aspect of a sociopath. One is the speed by which they can switch from one personality to another. The other is how they can go from complete calm to utter rage in a nanosecond.

Often, their partner will have no idea where this rage or outburst has come from, or what triggered it.

I've had some experience of this 'zero to nuclear reaction' myself. I was food shopping with a partner at the time (I was in a [coercive relationship](https://www.learning-mind.com/coercive-control-manipulation/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/coercive-control-manipulation/>)) and all appeared fine. We packed the food into the car and I sat down. He did not turn the engine on. I looked at him and his eyes were black and bulging in fury at me.

*"What on earth is the matter?" I asked.
"I saw you eyeing up that man on the checkout," he said.*

I had absolutely no idea what he was talking about, but my partner was convinced that I had been flirting with a random stranger who worked in the store. He was in a mood for 4 days.

5 Truths about What Upsets a Sociopath

1. You ignore them

Sociopaths are highly [narcissistic](https://www.learning-mind.com/narcissistic-sociopath/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/narcissistic-sociopath/>). So, if there's one thing that upsets a sociopath, it is **being ignored**. These people absolutely must have your undivided attention. You are theirs, you are their toy, their plaything, to be used as they wish.

After all, they have spent time and effort charming and manipulating you to get you to this point. You have more than likely been isolated from family and friends. They have groomed and [gaslighted](https://www.learning-mind.com/gaslighting-psychological-manipulation/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/gaslighting-psychological-manipulation/>) you into a submissive position in the relationship.

Now you have the temerity to ignore them? This is when their charming mask will slip and you'll get a glimpse of their real persona.

2. They can't get what they want

If an ordinary person cannot get what he or she wants, then rarely does it end

in violence or criminal activity. For a sociopath, however, not getting what they want is unthinkable. In fact, they will do anything to get what they want.



(<https://www.learning-mind.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/what-upsets-a-sociopath-2.jpg>)

Diane Downs

Consider the case of US mother **Diane Downs**. She shot her three children, murdering one and seriously injuring the other two. She wanted to be in a relationship with a man, but he didn't want children. This wasn't going to get in the way of her plans. She drove her children to a remote location and shot them in cold blood.

She blamed a carjacking gone wrong, but police became suspicious after this [narcissistic mother](https://www.learning-mind.com/how-to-deal-with-a-narcissistic-mother/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/how-to-deal-with-a-narcissistic-mother/>) laughed when re-enacting the shooting at the crime scene.

3. **Their control is taken away**

The easiest way I can describe this is for you to imagine someone who is in a **coercive relationship**. The sociopath has complete control over their partner. They will enjoy using a variety of tactics, including gaslighting, to keep their partner isolated and dominated by them.

What upsets a sociopath is when their partner tries to break free and leave this toxic situation. Unlike the psychopath, who will think carefully and in a calculated way, [the sociopath](https://www.learning-mind.com/dating-a-sociopath/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/dating-a-sociopath/>) will react instantly, and usually with terrible consequences.

You only have to look at convicted prisoners who have killed their partners. Typically, the sociopath will react in a rage and the injuries their partner sustains are described as 'overkill' by authorities.

4. You question their authority

We know that people who suffer from **anti-social disorders** like sociopathy are typically highly narcissistic individuals. As a result, they will not take kindly to anyone who questions what they say.

For the sociopath, image is everything. They cannot lose face in front of friends, family, colleagues, or even strangers. And it doesn't have to be a question of disagreeing with something they've said.

You might accidentally bump into someone and spill their drink in a bar. You apologise, offer to buy them another one, but before you know it, you are being punched over and over again.

This is the sociopath who feels as if you have purposefully dissed him or her in public. They **can't control their rage**, so they lash out.

5. You catch them in a lie

Sociopaths do not handle stress well at all. Unlike psychopaths, who are glib and cunning, sociopaths tend to buckle quickly under pressure. Your typical psychopath will quickly come up with lie after lie after lie. They have the mental capacity to swiftly change the subject or distract you.

They might even turn the tables and [blame you for the situation](https://www.learning-mind.com/blame-game-toxic-people/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/blame-game-toxic-people/>). On the other hand, [sociopaths](https://www.learning-mind.com/how-to-spot-a-sociopath/) (<https://www.learning-mind.com/how-to-spot-a-sociopath/>) tend to panic more under stress. They will have more of an impulsive reaction to lash out. Sure, they can brood and sulk for hours, days, if not weeks.

But unlike psychopaths, who expect some sort of challenge to their lies, **sociopaths will be indignant with anger** because you did not believe them.

Final Thoughts

Now, it's clear exactly what upsets a sociopath, and my advice is not to get involved in one if you can help it. However, speaking from experience, I know that's easier said than done.

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Janey Davies has been published online for over 10 years. She has suffered from a panic disorder for over 30 years, which prompted her to study and receive an Honours degree in Psychology with the Open University. Janey uses the experiences of her own anxiety to offer help and advice to others dealing with mental health issues.

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vanessa walters14 AUG 2020 [REPLY](#)

I was in a long time marriage (29 years) with one of these sociopaths..as Ive come to know, after years of being divorced and reading books/articles. I was never to know, when his 'good' moods, would suddenly, go to a rage..and I never knew what set him off..of course it was always MY fault. And then , he was upset, when I had just fallen apart during one of these rages. And wanted nothing to do with him, for awhile..

I tried to understand, sympathize, nothing worked. It never would, but I went through YEARS of this, before I exhausted myself..and left him. There's nothing to do, BUT leave, long before you get involved, engaged, married, kids. If your intuition tells you, something is "off"...it is..LEAVE HIM.

Bennett D. Fields13 AUG 2021 [REPLY](#)

My ex fiancé I now...right here, right now...recognize as a sociopath. I never knew how anyone could do the things she did. The cheating, the lying, the stealing, and working for the Sheriff Office at that...its been 3 years since I have seen my children I don't know for sure where they are as she left town with them after losing her job...I miss my sons every single day. If you can avoid what happened to me...I urge you to try.

D21 AUG 2021 [REPLY](#)

I thought 'psychopath' was a deprecated term no longer used by professionals.

Sara

27 NOV 2021 [REPLY](#)

If I die today, I will be glad free from inhuman monstrosity. Real humain people not evil fakes should have protection from these monsters. Especially people on the autism spectrum and society should not abandon people to become murderd or jailed for defending themselves. The wrong people are free, recking everything with pride in doing so, they enjoy being evil, only good cares about fixing things, lies that continue always graduate to murderous, some peope are just monsters ether they snap or they plan, both was a decision. That ladder always falls, caos is caos, evil is evil. Its a shame that a caotic society consists of 90% of blood thirtsty sico savages, 9% confused, 1% decent humain in the whole non civilized human population evident by the lack of a functioning non savage society. These monsters shouldnt be allowed to be perverted as they are.

Sylvia Harrison

27 MAR 2022 [REPLY](#)

I am with a sociopath now. hve been in this relationship for 4 years. he has socially isolated me, by spreading lies to my friends about me to prevent them from returning my calls and prevent them from calling me. He has deprived me of everything I love and enjoy. he emotionally abuses me to get his own way. I am nothing more than a thing to accompany him to do the things he wants to do. He is controlling, abusive and suffers from social anxiety to the point where we can't even talk to anyone else. I have left him more than 13 times, but every time he has used his relationship with my friends and family to get back to me. I have been, for the last 6 months, planting seeds gently to remind him that he needs to go. I believe the only way to get rid of him is if I gently persuade him to leave me.

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