**15 Early Relationship Red Flags**

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Are you going on a first date with someone and unsure about their texts?

Are you a few dates in and questioning some of the things someone said or did?

Maybe you’re even thinking about taking the leap into a relationship but are feeling uneasy about a thing or two.

We’re not here to scare you - but we do want to keep it real.

[Early dating red flags](https://www.garbo.io/people-search-sites) often lead to much more dangerous and abusive situations.

Before you go any further with your new interest, read the rest of this post or [take our early red flags quiz](https://form.typeform.com/to/k71Xrowl) to go even deeper into exploring early dating red flags.

What is a red flag in a relationship?

If you haven’t heard of this term before, we’re here to break it down.

So, what’s a red flag?

According to Merriam-Webster, a red flag is:

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*[verb] to identify or draw attention to (a problem or issue to be dealt with)*

*[noun] a warning signal or sign*

**In our own words, a red flag is the suggestion, or warning sign, of potentially dangerous behavior from someone.**

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Red flags often walk right up to the abusive behavior line and sometimes even dance all over it — and crossing the line can easily happen.

Red flags in dating aren’t always obvious. That’s why we’re here to break down early red flags in a romantic relationship.

15 Dating Red Flag Examples

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1. Lovebombing

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[**Love bombing**](https://www.garbo.io/blog/love-bombing)**is when someone frequently attempts to influence another person with over-the-top displays of attention and affection.**

Some examples of love bombing include:

* Excessive compliments
* Spending too much time together too soon
* Constant gifts
* Texting, emailing, calling many times a day
* Asking you to spend time with them rather than friends
* Mirroring all of your interests
* Excessive interest in your background, life, interests
* Wanting to take things to the next level quickly

Love bombing’s purpose is to make you feel appreciated so you are more receptive to them and their desires.  They get their victim to tell them intimate details of their life and later use these details against them. It is to attempt to ensure future emotional and physical intimacy while setting you up for long-term manipulation and abuse.

If it seems too good to be true, it often is. Love bombing seems wonderful when it’s happening, but it’s often a very early sign of things to come.

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2. They Don’t Respect Your Boundaries

Everyone has different physical, sexual, and mental boundaries. When beginning to date someone, it’s all about exploring these boundaries in a healthy way that makes each party feel respected and safe.

If someone is pressuring or coercing you into bending your boundaries, it’s a major early red flag in a relationship.

And they don’t just have to be sexual boundaries. Boundaries can also look like invading your personal space, asking too personal of questions, or even not respecting your time.

When someone pushes your boundaries in an unhealthy way, they don’t respect you.

When they don’t respect your boundaries, there is little to no consideration about your feelings in given situations.

3. They Check in Frequently

Everyone likes to feel cherished. Check-in messages, from time to time or at appropriate times, are an early green flag of a relationship.

However, if they’re excessively checking up on you - it’s an early red flag. Sometimes the differences between healthy and unhealthy is a fine line.

Do they text you when you’re out with friends more than once? Do they get upset if you’re out later than you said you would be — especially if you’re not in an exclusive, committed relationship?

If they check in with you to the point that it seems like they’re trying to keep track of you and your activities, then it could be a sign of much bigger red flags. 

4. They Want You to Always Prioritize Them

Early on, you want to make sure you’re not spending too much time with someone you’re just getting to know.

If they ask you to hang out more than a few times a week, this isn’t a sign they like you, it’s an early red flag.

If they ask you to hang out with them over your friends, it’s an early red flag.

And if they try to insert themselves into other areas of your life, like work or your hobbies, this could be an early red flag!

Having independence from each other is another green flag in a relationship.

A person who wants you to always prioritize them, either craves your attention and wants you to put them first before anything that fulfills you or they likely want to fill as much of your personal time and mind with their presence at your emotional expense.

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5. They’re Jealous

Jealousy is a combination of anxiety, insecurity, anger and fear.

These toxic emotions often come out with people who lack confidence in themselves.

While being a little green with envy when your partner is in the spotlight or looking is fine, there is a clear line between healthy envy and downright jealousy.

If your partner:

* They don’t want to hear your stories of past happy memories that don’t include them
* They don’t like when you hang out with your friends
* They get very defensive when you bring up past relationships or healthy boundaries
* They talk bad about you, your family, or your friends
* They call you names
* They get angry if someone tries to talk to you in a public setting

What makes jealousy toxic is when they are overly jealous to the point they try to control you, demean you, or disrespect you.

6. They Make Fun of You

It can be an early romantic red flag if someone your dating makes offhand comments about you — even if they say they’re joking. This could be everything from your clothing choices, favorite bands, to making fun of your career choices.

If someone says something that hurts you, even in the smallest way, you have the right to stand up for yourself and tell the person what you’re feeling. Being able to express your feelings is a sign of a healthy relationship.

Opinions are different from offensive comments. People may give their opinions on things, but some opinions are either uncaring of the feelings and beliefs of others or targeted to make them feel shame for their actions and preferences.

If you feel like you can’t call them on the table when they say something offensive, it’s a red flag!

7. All of Their Exes are Crazy

In this red flag example, whenever they talk about their past relationships, they make  themselves seem the victim of their former lovers’ bad behavior.

However you may find out that this isn’t the whole truth (or even slightly true!).

If they have nothing good to say about their exes, they’ll probably have nothing good to say about you.

8. They Don’t Have Many Friends

Some people are naturally loners, as in they prefer to be by themselves some/most of the time.

But if they’re a loner because they dislike others or because others dislike them, it’s likely that they’re just unpleasant — and it could be a red flag.

Sometimes you’ll find individuals who have friends but they’re somehow all incentivized to be there — whether its business associates, people “below them” on a certain strata that they’re “helping”, or some other uneven dynamic.

Also, even in the increasingly digital age, it’s a red flag if someone only has online friends, there is a big age gap between them and a majority of their friends, or their friends are all of a similar race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

9. Your Friends Don’t Like Them

Your friends are your friends for a reason. It’s often because they share the same interests and values as you.

So, if your friends don’t like your new romantic interest, it can be a major red flag. People often give off vibes that, when too close, you don’t have the perspective to sense.

A true friend is going to feel like they can tell you how they really feel — even if it might hurt your feelings in the moment.

If your new date is down right mean, rude, or disrespectful to your friends: GET OUT!

10. They Aren’t Very Motivated

We live in a capitalist country. I don’t need to say that twice.

But motivation doesn’t necessarily mean career advancement and productivity. Although the inability to maintain a job IS a major red flag.

Are they motivated to learn or try new things?

Are they motivated to find new, fun date ideas?

Or… do they constantly try new things but don’t commit? Do they give up too easy? Do they complain a lot? These are all red flags!

11. They Never Initiate (Conversations, Intimacy, Dates)

Does your partner have to be pressed to talk to you, be intimate, or go out on dates?

Reflect on how many times you have initiated conversations in the last two weeks. Were you always the one reaching out?

If you’re further on in the relationship, are you always the one that makes the first romantic move? You should both be passionate and excited about the relationship!

12. They’re Hot and Cold

Okay, first, be on the lookout for BENCHING and BREADCRUMBING!

Benching is When someone you've been dating stops agreeing to meet in person but continues to contact you over message or social media.

Breadcrumbing is leading someone on with no intention of ever meeting in-person or building a real relationship

Are they wishy-washy with their affections? Do they draw away from you for long periods and seem to want you to go after them?

UGH - red flag!

13. Excessive Alcohol Usage

[Study](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dar.12434) after [study](https://diversityhealthcare.imedpub.com/alcohol-misuse-contributor-to-and-consequence-of-violence-against-women.php?aid=2291) has linked the overconsumption of alcohol to gender-based violence.

Now we’re not saying every alcohol user is an abuser — that’s definitely not true.

But if someone can’t control their alcohol usage, it’s likely they can’t control other things in their life — including their emotions.

Keep an early eye out if every early date involves alcohol. Try to hang out with them sober first to see if you really like their personality!

14. You’re Scared to Have the Relationship Talk

Have you found yourself in a situationship? Are you scared to [define the relationship](https://www.garbo.io/people-search-sites)?

A situationship is a romantic relationship that is, and remains, undefined or loosely defined.

While this can be a normal feeling for a few weeks, you should feel comfortable asking your soon-to-be-partner what both of you want in a relationship.

And, on the flip side, you might NOT want to be in a relationship with them. Maybe you’re looking for something casual or open — and that’s okay… If you communicate!

Clear communication is a sign of a healthy relationship. If you’re afraid to tell them things, it can be an indicator of bigger red flags to come. 

15. You Have a Bad Gut Feeling

Trusting your gut is key to nearly everything in life — and it is especially true for dating!

Dating is all about getting to know someone and seeing if you’re interested in building a relationship with someone.

Relationships are all about:

* Going at a comfortable pace
* Building trust
* Being honest
* Having independence from each other
* Valuing each other’s beliefs
* Feeling balanced
* Being caring and compassionate
* Taking responsibility
* Having healthy conflict
* HAVING FUN!

Learn more about the [ten signs of a healthy relationship](https://www.joinonelove.org/signs-healthy-relationship/) and top [relationship goals](https://www.garbo.io/blog/relationship-goals).

What Do You Do When You See Red Flags When Dating

Has even one of these early red flags resonated with you?

What about a few?

Even one early red flag can be a sign of something bigger. Make sure you’re not wearing rose-colored glasses when just getting to know someone.

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**Here are some things to do if you start seeing red flags:**

* Know your limits, stick to them, and express them in your discussions about certain behaviors.
* Analyze and assess whether you mostly feel true admiration and respect in the relationship
* Choose people who show positive traits early on
* Always trust your gut
* Don’t be afraid to ghost them if it is not safe to express your feelings or exit the relationship

Early Red Flags Quiz

Take our [early red flags quiz](https://form.typeform.com/to/k71Xrowl) to see if you are headed into an unhealthy relationship.