

“Trashing”

When I was dating Hispanic X, he would become very angry and jealous of my friends and I. I was very young. I was loyal, but also outgoing. One day, he became so angry about “dust” on the floors that he took the trash and threw it all over the kitchen, telling me to clean it up. I was shocked. I think he was also shocked by his own behavior, because he eventually chose to clean up the mess himself. Still, I was traumatized by the experience.

Not long afterward, he physically assaulted me. First, he began moving chairs toward my dogs, and I was afraid he was going to hurt them. I said, “Stop!” The next thing I knew, he pushed me so hard that I fell backward and scraped my elbows on the carpet.

Another experience I had while in a relationship with X involved my health. I had become ill. I was not sleeping well and was coughing frequently at night. I had developed allergies to my work environment. I eventually went to the hospital and received a diagnosis. I began attending multiple medical appointments.

One day, when I came home, X told me that he had spoken to my doctor. According to him, the doctor had asked, “Is she really sick?” They had apparently discussed my health and my symptoms without my consent.

These experiences involving invasions of my personal space, my environment, and my health privacy continued over time.

To better understand situations like this, I recommend following a simple ten-point framework:

1. No assumptions.
2. No biases.
3. No hasty generalizations.
4. No judgments.
5. Ask questions.
6. Have empathy for all.
7. Consider patterns within personal relationships and society.
8. Examine the progression of coercive behaviors.
9. Understand emotional intimidation.
10. Examine how personal experiences can escalate into larger social harms.

Another experience I had involved being young, free-spirited, and simply wanting friendship without romantic interests. I met two White male individuals on the island. They were friendly, but it became apparent that they struggled with alcohol abuse. At the time, I was very young-minded and lacked situational awareness.

They would invite me over during the daytime to play cards, and I would occasionally visit. They told interesting stories, and I viewed it as part of the “island experience.” They did not have a vehicle, and at the time I was borrowing one from a friend. They often asked me to drive them to the store, and over time this became part of our “friendship routine.” I drove them without expecting anything in return. They would buy groceries and, often, alcohol.

As time passed, I became more aware of the severity of their alcohol abuse problems. One day, while I was alone in a room, one of the men expressed romantic interest in me. I was not interested. I only viewed him as a friend, and I also recognized that he was struggling with alcoholism. At that point, he did not appear angry.

However, one day while we were driving, the vehicle I had borrowed began losing battery power. He suddenly became very angry and started calling me degrading names such as “*btch*” and “*stupid st.*” His behavior became increasingly hostile. Looking back, I believe I had already become somewhat desensitized to abusive behavior. I recognized that he was under the influence, and I tried to remain calm and not take his words personally.

His volatility, however, continued to escalate. Another driver eventually assisted me, and I chose to leave without him. Later, I saw him again. Because I had become desensitized to these behaviors and tended to be forgiving, I chose to forgive him, believing that his conduct had been influenced by alcohol.

Unfortunately, the hostility continued. He later told me that I was a “*sl*t*,” that “everyone in town knew,” and that he had spoken to other people about me. In other words, he not only remained verbally abusive, but also attempted to smear my reputation within the community.

I feel that experiences like this contributed to the opening of hostilities within the town. What stands out to me is that I had been very kind to these individuals. I had donated my time, energy, and resources to help them get to the store and obtain what they needed. It became one of many difficult lessons I would later learn.

Because of this experience, and several others, I eventually made the decision not to surround myself with individuals who excessively consume alcohol or struggle with alcoholism. I came to believe that the risks are simply too high. No matter how kind, generous, forgiving, or compassionate someone may be, alcohol can become a profoundly negative influence on behavior. I also came to recognize how entitlement, emotional intimidation, and personal invasion can contribute to escalating hostility and harm.

[AI grammar correction removed Hispanic, however kept “White” (lower cased) - I added it back as the context is important in recognizing cultural patterns].