

## ARE YOU A BULLY SPOUSE?

Spouses who bully their husband or wife can appear to be expert emotional and psychological manipulators. In reality, they probably aren't truly aware of everything they are doing and they are definitely not aware of how others see them. Even reading the list of bullying behaviors below will have little effect on the bully unless they are willing to genuinely hear from another about what is said. Simply put, although some bullies are simply mean and sadistic people, more often most bullies simply lack self-awareness. They have learned to get their way in life through dysfunctional behavior. They are like a spoiled, bratty child who just got taller and older, but are essentially on an emotional level the same as they were on their childhood playground.

**To paraphrase Jeff Foxworthy, "You might be a bully if..."**

1. Your spouse avoids eyes contact with you when there is a disagreement.
2. Your spouse is easily overwhelmed by your negative response. He or she goes into that "scared puppy" mode.
3. No one in the family seeks out your guidance—you give it—but not because they asked.
4. Other people are always the problem and always to blame. You are rarely at fault, and the times you were it was only because of what someone else did or said. "Everything would be fine if they would just..."
5. You never sincerely ask for suggestions from your spouse. Only when they disagree with you do you sarcastically reply, "Then what do *you* think we should do?"
6. All goes well around the home as long as everyone agrees with you or complies quietly.
7. You ignore your spouse or withdraw from them as a way of punishing them.
8. You pout and sulk like a child, often withdrawing to be alone in another room away from your spouse or family while waiting for them to come to you.
9. You use the silent stare to intimidate and increase their discomfort before launching your verbal barrage.
10. Your spouse *never voluntarily* shares his or her ideas or suggestions.
11. Your spouse *never asks* for your "helpful suggestions" that you are more than happy to give.
12. You systematically seek to dismantle or disprove your spouse's position in an argument—even if it takes hours or days.
13. You dominate conversations because you think your opinion matters more. Your attitude is that you have "the right" to tell others how to live, what to do, what to think or what you want.
14. Your overdeveloped sense of entitlement helps you feel anything you do or say is justified. When you hear people say of you, "Well, that's just the way they are..." or when you say about yourself, "Well, that's the way I am" *it's not a good thing.*
15. You expect "blind loyalty" from your spouse—to follow without question. In other words, your spouse "goes along to get along" or is primarily concerned with just keeping the peace, because if you aren't happy, nobody's happy!
16. You can and will embarrass your spouse in front of friends and family with mean-spirited comments to "put them in their place" or you may mock and ridicule them.
17. You often use past failures or mistakes of your spouse to increase his or her feelings of guilt to aid in winning an argument or getting your way. In other words, your guilt trips are legendary.
18. You engage in "shock-n-awe" tactics to back people down. In other words, knowing most people want to avoid conflict, you do not mind taking or behavior or words to the next level to get your way or your point across.
19. You are often accused of yelling at others, you might be a bully.
20. If you became angry or annoyed while reading this, you might be a bully.

21. If you think everyone always makes you the “bad guy”, you might be a bully.
22. If you are offended because people say you cannot be pleased, you might be a bully.
23. If you use social networking sites to embarrass your spouse, you might be a bully.
24. If you feel you must “get even” with others when you feel slighted, you might be a bully.

All this behavior and more like it is made possible because a person has become indifferent to the feelings of others. The good news is that this can be changed.

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In an article titled by Cathy Chapman, Ph.D. titled, *Are You an Adult Bully?* Dr. Chapman offers some suggestions for those who realize they have been bullying others or have been accused of bullying. She offers the following:

Many bullies lack empathy. This type is *not* someone who would be reading this article. If you are a bully and are reading this, then you are someone who is at least open to change. The following require honest reflection.

1. You first need to realize that what you are doing is harmful. If you want to know how harmful, imagine yourself being the victim of the behavior you are doing. Imagining this is probably not difficult. You most likely have numerous events in your own life in which you were bullied by peers and maybe even your parents.
2. Recognize that your desire to harm another has to do with your need to feel more important than or better than another. This means you are insecure. You have little sense of your own gifts and talents. You believe your only recourse is to harm someone else to make you feel better.
3. When you feel that impulse to put someone down just stop and take a deep breath. You need to break this habitual pattern.
4. It is important for you to get in touch with how you are feeling. Did something happen in which you felt the need to make yourself look more important or better than another by bullying?
5. Notice how old you feel when you want to bully. Simply take a moment to ask yourself, "How old do I feel?" This information gives you the age at which you were wounded in a way that resulted in your acting out your anger, fear or insecurity by harming another.

Do something proactive to heal yourself. This could be a therapist, healing prayer or another method to assist you in healing yourself. You deserve healing and others deserve to be safe.

### **12 Signs You Might Be A Bully**

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/meghancasserly/2012/03/16/are-you-a-bully-and-dont-even-know-it/>

**If more of us just spoke up, bullies would lose their shock and awe power.** And it's time the rest of us had some shock and awe on our side instead.

<http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/2013/01/adult-bullies-and-their-enablers/>

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