

Confront Your Toxic Relationship

Are you afraid of confronting someone in your life who is critical, judgmental or just can't be happy for your success? Your life may be full of people who are draining your energy and therefore not letting you live the life of your dreams. Life coach Cheryl Richardson helps you find out how to identify these people and take steps to heal or end these relationships.

Toxic Qualities in People

Some relationships constantly drain your energy, in both obvious and subtle ways. Several types of people will exhaust you or deter you from your path to living a fulfilled life. Richardson describes six types of toxic qualities in people.

- **The Blamer**

This person likes to hear his own voice. He constantly complains about what isn't working in his life and yet gets energy from complaining and dumping his frustrations on you.

- **The Drainer**

This is the needy person who calls to ask for your guidance, support, information, advice or whatever she needs to feel better in the moment. Because of her neediness, the conversation often revolves around her, and you can almost feel the life being sucked out of you during the conversation.

- **The Shamer**

This person can be hazardous to your health. The shamer may cut you off, put you down, reprimand you, or make fun of your or your ideas in front of others. He often ignores your boundaries and may try to convince you that his criticism is for your own good. The shamer is the kind of person who makes you question your own sanity before his.

- **The Discounter**

This is the person who discounts or challenges everything you say. Often, she has a strong need to be right and can find fault with any position. It can be exhausting to have a conversation with the discounter, so eventually you end up giving in and deciding to just listen.

- **The Gossip**

This person avoids intimacy by talking about other behind their backs. The gossip gets energy from relaying stories, opinions, and the latest "scoop." By gossiping about others, he creates a lack of safety in his relationships, whether he realizes it or not. After all, if he'll talk about someone else, he'll talk about you.

Test the Quality of Your Relationships

Since soulful connections require an investment of time and energy, you'll want to choose the people you spend time with wisely. To determine whether a relationship drains you or fuels you, ask yourself the following questions.

- Write down the name of a person in your life.
- Am I able to be myself with this person? Do I feel accepted by him/her?
- Is this person critical or judgmental of me?
- Does the relationship provide an even give-and-take exchange of energy?
- Do I feel upbeat and energized when I'm around this person, or depleted and drained?
- Does this person share my values? My level of integrity?
- Is this person committed to our relationship?
- Can this person celebrate my success?
- Do I feel good about myself when I'm with this person?

Confronting Conflict with Grace

Wondering how to confront people who drain you mentally, physically and spiritually? Once you have identified that you have a toxic relationship in your life, there are specific words that you can use to confront this family member or friend in a graceful, loving way. Your goal is not necessary to sever all relationships; it's to set boundaries with this person. If you feel the relationship can be healed, follow these steps.

- **Step One: Set the stage.**
"In an effort to honor our relationship, I need to tell you the truth..."
- **Step Two: Follow up with how you feel.**
"When you _____ it makes me feel _____..."
- **Step Three: Then ask your family member or friend.**
"Are you willing to stop doing that?"

Examples

"In an effort to honor our relationship I need to tell you the truth. When you complain about your boss every week, it leaves me feeling drained of energy. If you're willing to do something about the situation, I'll support you 100%, but I can no longer listen to your complaints. Are you willing?" Then... "If you forget this conversation in the future, I promise to support you and our relationship by asking you to tell me how I can support you in taking action to fix the problem."

"In an effort to honor our relationship I need to tell you the truth. When you put me down I feel angry and hurt. In order for us to continue seeing each other, I need to ask you to stop. Are you willing?"

"In an effort to honor our relationship I need to tell you the truth. When you criticize me I feel drained and upset. I'd like to ask you to stop doing that so we can move closer instead of further apart. Are you willing?"

(From Cheryl Richardson's book *Take Time for Your Life*.)