

DARLING

the art of being a woman

BY [JESSICA YAFFA](#) [THE CONFIDANT](#) APRIL 25, 2015

5 RED RELATIONSHIP FLAGS



One in four. That's the number of women who will be victims of domestic violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. For seven years, I was that one in four. As a result, my ex-husband was sent to prison for 29 years. In the last year, the media has been flooded with domestic violence stories. From a professional athlete attacking his wife in an elevator, to the increase of sexual violence on college campuses, this problem is not one that will go away quickly.

Rather than let my abusive past dictate the rest of my life, I chose to transform a set of extremely traumatic circumstances into a triumphant story. In 2007, I founded H.E.A.L.I.N.G, the first domestic violence ministry in San Diego, which has served nearly 7,000 men, women and children.

One of the most common questions I'm asked is, "How do I avoid entering another abusive relationship?"

Whether you've been in a past abusive relationship or you think you might be heading into one, here are five red flags and warning signs to look out for:

1. Your partner controls how time is managed and looks for inconsistencies in routine.

Many abusive relationships begin with the perpetrator demanding that his or her partner calls them constantly, avoid certain friends, manage clothing and dress style, and monitor their partner's whereabouts.

2. Isolation.

Abusive relationships contain dynamics of power and control. Most abusive partners look for opportunities to limit contact with outside family and friends in order to eliminate who may influence their partner's decisions. This includes monitoring phone calls, prohibiting contact, picking fights and demanding all time and attention be given to them.

3. Extreme jealousy and insecurity.

Often in the early stages of relationship abuse, the perpetrator will make outrageous accusations of their partner without cause. There may be regular fights about any engagement with the opposite sex, fear of cheating, hypersensitivity around any interaction with other males (assuming the victim is female) and constant blame of their partner as fights about these issues ensue.

4. Past abusive relationships.

Statistically speaking, many perpetrators of abuse have a history of acting out in relationships. If you partner or potential partner has been accused of being abusive in the past, please pay attention.

5. Threats.

An abusive partner may threaten to hurt children, friends, parents, pets or the victim themselves when enraged. Threats of any kind should be taken seriously and indicate an abusive relationship.

“If you are fortunate enough to not be personally affected, be mindful that your mother, sister, daughter, co-worker, or best friend might be.”

When it comes to domestic violence, no matter your race, whether you're rich or poor, where you live, or your education level, it affects us all. When it comes to your own relationship, honestly examine what you are going through. *Are you fearful? Have you lost your self-confidence?* The epidemic of domestic violence is a solvable issue if we all invest in affirming

one another's worth while providing support, prevention, intervention, and education anywhere and everywhere we have the opportunity to do so.

If you are fortunate enough to not be personally affected, be mindful that your mother, sister, daughter, co-worker, or best friend might be. It's *for her* that you must invest in eliminating the stigma, shame, and judgment that continues to exist for survivors of domestic violence around the globe.

For more information on Jessica and her work, check out her [website](#) and [The Restoration Inn](#).

Image via [Tory Rust](#)

Jessica Yaffa

Jessica is the founder and president of NoSilence NoViolence, a non-profit organization which is committed to providing resources and aid to those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. In 2014, alongside Practical Recovery, Jessica helped open The Restoration Inn, the first women's only rehab to offer trauma informed treatment for women from a self-empowered perspective. This new facility offers specialized treatment surrounding relationship abuse (including domestic violence, rape, and childhood sexual abuse) and substance use disorders.