

# Is My Relationship Picker Broken? 5 Signs You're Choosing Emotional Manipulators

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Is it possible to have a broken picker when it comes to choosing a partner? Have you ever wondered why you have a pattern of malfunctioning relationships? I have worked with clients over many years that all appear to have selected partners who are consistently manipulative. I'm here to tell you, choosing poorly in relationships is not just due to being unlucky. There is actually some rhyme and reason to it. But I am not just referring to regular relationships with a partner who refuses to pick up his socks or a partner who doesn't know how to cook. I am referring to the doomed pattern that occurs when we pick a partner who is emotionally manipulative.

First, let's briefly discuss what an emotional manipulator looks like. There are a multitude of different descriptions of what an emotional manipulator looks and acts like, but the short answer is someone who knows how to exploit every vulnerability and weakness you have and will do it at the drop of a hat.

Why do we pick these people? What is it about us that encourages the emotional manipulator to target us and why do we keep going back? If you want to figure out why you are a poor picker, then read on.

## **Indicator #1: You have low self-esteem.**

I know, I know, shocking! Doesn't everyone have low self-esteem of some sort? Yes, arguably so, but poor pickers who choose emotionally manipulative people to be their partners have issues with self-love. They struggle to love themselves unconditionally and unconsciously seek to find someone who can take up that slack. They end up choosing a person who has their own issues with self-love. **Spoiler alert:** Emotionally manipulative people also have low self-esteem and lack unconditional self-love.

**Solution:** Work on your self-love! How you ask? It's very simple; treat yourself like you would treat your best friend. If you won't tell your best friend she's horrible, don't say it to yourself. And, oh yeah, you don't have to believe what you tell yourself at first for this to work. Fake it til you make it!

## **Indicator #2: You thrive on taking care of other people.**

What's wrong with this you say? Well, in healthy relationships, we care **for** one another; we don't **take care of** one another. Of course, I am working on the assumption that most people are capable of taking care of themselves (which, I dare say, they are). But, poor pickers believe that people need to be **taken care of**. And, of course, emotional manipulators are more than willing to present themselves as victims who need someone to pay attention to them, enable them and take care of them.

**Solution:** Divorce the idea that grown adults need to be taken care of. They don't! Now, this is not to say that there aren't people who "suck" at life. There are! But, the reason they suck is likely because you have been doing everything for them. So, stop! Use your energy toward working on your own self-esteem (see Indicator #1). When you do this, I promise you will feel much, much better.

### **Indicator #3: They have an unrealistic, romanticized idea of love.**

Wouldn't everyone like to ride off into the sunset with our ideal partner? Of course, but let's get real, that isn't going to happen. Love takes time! That's right folks, "love at first sight," "He told me he was going to rescue me," or "It was a thunderbolt of lightning" is not love! I'll repeat it... it's not love! For the poor picker, however; these statements are music to their ears. Remember, the low self-esteem critic is very loudly whispering in your ear, so hearing someone say they are going to "take you away from all this" is hard to resist.

**Solution:** Love is created and developed with trust, effort, and understanding over time. If your partner is asking you to go 150mph and you just met, slow it down! You can't see anything going 150mph in a car, so why would you think you could do it in a relationship?

### **Indicator #4: Difficulty identifying their own reality.**

No, I'm not saying that poor pickers are crazy. But, it is unlikely that they are in touch with their emotions or are willing and able to express their emotions. It is more than likely that poor pickers are avoiding their true emotions by self-medicating, and/or engaging in compulsive unfulfilling behaviors like spending, eating, and working too much. They are not talking about their unpleasant emotions, engaging in dialogue about difficult topics and definitely not sharing their day with their families around the dinner table.

**Solution:** Start identifying your emotions. Ok, this might be a hard one to do on your own, but that's what therapists are for. Find a therapist who can help you identify and express your emotions so you can learn to live in the reality of your own life.

### **Indicator #5: They are looking for someone outside of themselves to solve all of their past relationship problems from their family of origin.**

Ok, so this is a biggie! What does this mean? It means that we all pick partners who are familiar to us (aka: We marry our parents). As humans, we are looking for what is comfortable for us. We aren't out in the world saying, "Bring on the most awkward and uncomfortable experience ever!" Nope, we connect with people who have characteristics we are familiar with. In the case of the poor picker, what is familiar is dysfunctional. The poor picker chooses someone who unconsciously reminds them of their dysfunctional parent(s). They believe that if they can make the relationship work with the dysfunctional partner, they can fix what was broken in their childhood. Sounds like a plan, right? Sorry, the only way to fix problems from childhood is to work on ourselves to resolve any issues remaining from childhood.

**Solution:** This would be a job for that therapist I mentioned in the solution for Indicator #4. A trained professional can help you sort through any unresolved issues with your family so that you can move from being a poor picker to being a healthy picker.

So, now you know! Go out there and turn your poor picker into a healthy picker!