Toxic

Spring is in the air, the last cool snap of winter has passed and the kids are heading to the beaches for a bad sunburn. They may even find a new love, the possibilities on the sands of St. Simons seem endless.

But not all of these relationships will be healthy, like the parable of the sower, some efforts at love fall on stony ground, some get caught up in the weeds, and sometimes the birds fly away with your efforts toward love. How can you know if he/she is the one or not?

Maybe these thoughts are for you; maybe a friend needs to consider their situation. Here are some tips indicating your knew relationship is in trouble.

Do you need to put on a front or happy mask to make the other happy? I’m not talking about the need to put your best foot forward; we all do that and should. Chris Rock said when we go out on our first date, we don’t go as ourselves, we send a representative. And there’s nothing wrong with that, but if you have to hold it as a constant position, then something is wrong.

A second sign of a toxic relationship presents as a constant power struggle. If both feel they have to fight and argue, then true happiness will be hard to find. Power and control constitute a dual set of warning signs to be avoided. This may present itself as an aggressive stance demanding that a project or destination needs to happen a certain way. But some can be very powerful with their passivity, like a wounded bird, all the attention and energy goes to them. The need to win, even when the outcome is unimportant evidences a more pathological problem.

Third is jealousy. Distrust, paranoia and obsession point to this problem. “Who have you been with?” or “where were you?” are the hallmarks of this warning sign. Jealousy can also present as a constant need for confirmation. It may sound like, ‘I have to have all of your attention to make sure you love me and don’t have any interest in anyone else.’ Of course it’s never said so directly.

Intense feelings warn of a fourth way your relationship will turn toxic. I once had a young lady tell me of showing up a little late for a second date. As she pulled in to park, he was standing on the curb waiting. He angrily threw his drink on the ground and started walking toward her. She put the car in reverse, pulled out and never looked back, no time for crazy boyfriends.

Sadness, self-pity, and hurt are the opposite side of that coin. Anger and hurt can both be manipulative, directing the relationship such that the energy all goes to the high emotions.

Finally, inattentiveness should let you know something isn’t right. Forgetting a date, time with friends, and final second consideration suggest you are not high on their priority list. Make yourself the priority, move on.

**COUPLING: Signs your spring romance may be going toxic**

April 7, 2015

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But not all of these relationships will be healthy. Like the parable of the sower, some efforts at love fall on stony ground, some get caught up in the weeds, and sometimes the birds fly away with your efforts toward love. How can you know if he/she is the right one?

Maybe you’re pondering this yourself, or maybe a friend needs to consider their situation. Here are some tips indicating this new relationship is in trouble.

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