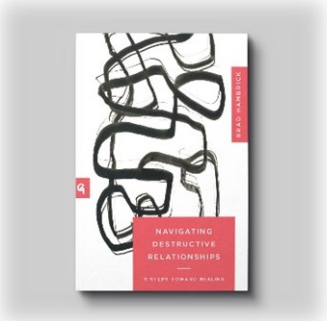
Destructive Relationship Assessment

Instructions: Read the following descriptive statements. Mark the answer that most accurately fits you or your loved one. Each statement clearly indicates who is being assessed. If the situations described have not happened (for instance, your loved one does not have children), either skip that item or answer based upon what you realistically believe you would do if you were in a comparable situation.



(N) almost never, (R) rarely, (S) sometimes,
(F) frequently, or (A) almost always

Note: This assessment assumes the dominant dysfunctional relationship is with your spouse and you share a home. If that is not the case, you will need to substitute work, school, church, or another social setting to make items match your circumstance.

1. My loved one hits, chokes, or assaults in other physical ways.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
2. My loved one threatens to use a gun, knife, or other weapon against me.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
3. My loved one forces me or other family members into unwanted sexual activity.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
4. My loved one drives while intoxicated with me and other family members in the vehicle.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
5. My loved one manipulates finances and transportation so I cannot get away.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
6. My loved one wants to limit my time with my family.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
7. My loved one wants to limit my time with my friends.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
8. When I spend time with others, I must answer many questions about what I said or did.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
9. My loved one degrades my friends and family so I will value their perspectives less.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
10. I often hide my social interaction with others so I "won't get in trouble."	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
11. Your loved one responds to you as if you are wonderful or terrible, rarely in between.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
12. Your loved one often says "I never said/did that" to things they obviously said/did.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
13. Abusive behaviors are minimized by your loved one saying "You're too sensitive."	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
14. When your loved one is offensive, you are often blamed for thinking you're perfect.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
15. The absence of conflict with their peers becomes evidence for why this is your fault.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
16. I make excuses for my loved one's conflicts or missed appointments/work/classes.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
17. When my loved one lies to other people, I let it slide.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
18. I do extra work to complete projects or assignments my loved one neglected.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
19. I lied to children or friends about why commitments were neglected.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
20. I avoid activities or conversations with friends, so I won't expose my loved one.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
21. I clean up vomit or fix damage to the house from my loved one's intoxication or anger.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
22. I pay overdue bills or help catch up on debt accruing because of addiction.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
23. I make up stories about bruises or other injuries to myself or the children.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
24. I go along with major purchases or other foolish decisions to avoid conflict.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
25. I spend a lot of energy preventing my loved one from being upset or found out.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
26. I repeatedly tell my loved one they need to stop.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
27. I use tears (heightened emotions) or yelling (elevated volume) to compel them to stop.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
28. I make passive-aggressive comments to make them feel guilty for not stopping.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
29. I verbalized lists of the negative consequences of their actions to persuade them.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
30. When nothing else works, I use extended periods of punishing silence.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
31. I have threatened to separate and take the kids if my loved one doesn't stop.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
32. I have threatened to expose my loved one to their parents, family, boss, or friends.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
33. I talk vividly about what I should do if things don't change.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
34. I make bold claims about what my loved one would do if he/she were in my shoes.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
35. I threatened to tell people at church or legal authorities if things don't change.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
36. I often say "I don't care" when I do have a preference.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
37. I often share what I think people want to hear instead of my true thoughts or feelings.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
38. My personality, vocabulary, and behaviors change based upon who I am around.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
39. I frequently compromise my values to please those who are around me.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
40. I have a significant fear of people disapproving of what I say, think, or do.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**

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41. I replay social interactions in my mind trying to make sure I did it "right."	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
42. I spend a great deal of time trying to interpret what people think of me.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
43. When I make decisions that impact others, I second-guess it a lot.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
44. I often remember past, awkward social interactions and feel the shame intensely.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
45. I frequently end up doing projects or assignments no one else wants to do.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
46. My fear of disappointing people is a primary motivator for me.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
47. When a job is finished, I feel more relief for not failing than sense of accomplishment.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
48. I remember words of criticism more vividly than words of encouragement.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
49. I rely on my accomplishments more than the gospel to quell my negative self-thoughts.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**
50. I never seem to know when I've done "enough" and can rest.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**F**	**A**

Scoring Key: For ease of scoring, each criterion is in a group of five questions, and what is being assessed in each grouping is described below. The point system for each letter is as follows.

- "N" or "R" response = 0 points
- "S" response = 1 point
- "F" response = 2 points
- "A" response = 3 points
- If your total score is 5 to 9, it is a significant concern.
- If your total score is 10 or higher, it should be considered a severe concern.

Note: This is a descriptive and not scientific instrument. It is not meant for clinical or diagnostic purposes. Instead, it is meant to increase self-awareness about the types of behaviors that contribute to various destructive patterns in a relationship.

Category One: Destructive Relationship Patterns in Your Loved One—It is beyond the scope of this assessment to determine the presence or extent of abuse or addiction in your loved one's life.[i] In Category One of this assessment, we want to see unhealthy patterns that are easy to miss because the climactic moments involving your loved one's addiction or aggression get all the attention. We want to see the things that make the destructive pattern more permanent and prevalent in your relationship.

- Questions 1–5: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe **safety-level concerns**. These actions indicate that you need more help than just attending a G4 group. These are indications that you need to read Appendix B on "Creating a Safety Plan." Talking with local law enforcement, the National Domestic Violence Hotline[ii] (1-800-799-7233), or comparable professional in your area would be wise. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that because things could always be worse, your situation is not that bad.

- Questions 6–10: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe a **constricting social sphere**. One way that destructive individuals maintain control over their loved one is to limit the number of healthy voices in their world. When the destructive individual is the only voice in your world, they have disproportionate influence over your life. When a loved one begins to forbid or degrade healthy friendships, it is a significant red flag that your relationship with your loved one is destructive.
- Questions 11–15: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe methods of creating **self-doubt**. These are the kinds of behaviors that you may have heard called *gaslighting*. Not only does a destructive person want you to trust family and friends less, but they also want you to doubt yourself. The more they cause you to doubt yourself, the more influence they have on your life. This self-doubt (feeling crazy) often leads to passivity in taking proactive steps to affect change. We lose confidence that we can think clearly enough to make choices of this magnitude, so we allow things to remain the same.

Category Two: Destructive Relationship Patterns in You—In destructive relationships, we may do things that enable or perpetuate dysfunction. That doesn't mean our loved one's destructive patterns are our fault. It does mean that the more we do these things the more we reinforce the destructive pattern. Identifying these behaviors helps you begin to weigh

whether it is worth it to change them. Again, that choice is yours to make. But until we classify these actions as part of the destructive pattern, we easily see them as normal. We view these actions negatively, not because they are morally wrong, but because they feed the destructive pattern in our relationships. It's not that we need to repent for these actions, but we do need to weigh the possibility of changing them.

- Questions 16–20: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe actions that **cover up destructive patterns**. It is often easier for us to take small steps to keep life normal. In the moment, none of these actions seems like a big deal. However, over time they remove the social repercussions of our loved one's actions that could prompt them to change. Our efforts to keep the peace come at the cost of removing the consequences that might interrupt the destructive patterns.

- Questions 21–25: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe **rescuing and fixing**. None of us want our loved ones to suffer. That's why, when we can, we reduce their hardship. We feel compelled by love to do so. We would feel guilty if we didn't. We would feel like they're right when they get mad at us for not having done more. But the net effect of our rescuing is akin to taking the batteries out of the fire alarm in a burning house. We care best for our loved one by allowing the alarm of natural consequences to sound in their life. We pray this awakens them to their need to change.

- Questions 26–30: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe **nagging**. While these requests and warnings are warranted, this style of warning is ineffective. The nuisance (as our loved one sees it) of our verbal repetition allows our words to be seen as the primary problem. Think about it: habitual destructive choices are not made because our loved one simply forgot they wanted to make a better choice. Our verbal repetition is not what is needed to change our loved one's ingrained destructive patterns.

- Questions 31–35: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe **threatening**. Destructive patterns do warrant strong actions. But another term for *threat* is *bluff*. In a destructive relationship, empty threats are as counterproductive as a parent who says to a misbehaving child, "If you do that one more time, I will [consequence]," but never follows through. Empty threats teach your loved one to ignore you; more than that, it reveals they have all the power in the relationship. If actions need to be taken, take them rather than talk about them. The rest of this study will be about identifying those actions and preparing you to follow through on them in a way that prevents your words from being a bluff.

Category Three: Fear of Man Resulting from a Destructive Relationship—If category two was about what we do in response to a destructive relationship, category three is about how the destructive relationship impacts us. If unaccounted for, these impacts are what makes the damage done by an unhealthy relationship linger long after the destructive person is no longer part of our life. For example, when a child grows up and leaves a destructive home, these are the dispositional changes that still interfere with a healthy, flourishing adult life.

- Questions 36–40: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe **surrendering voice and agency**. In a destructive relationship, we often become conditioned to choose peace over everything else. We surrender our voice and begin to believe our choices can only make life worse (never better), so we try to avoid having opinions or making choices. If we start a sentence with "I want" or "I like" it feels selfish. Consequently, the preferences of family and friends gain a disproportionate influence in our life. You should be able to vocalize your preferences without a sense of guilt or fear. In healthy relationships, influence over choices doesn't have to be fifty–fifty, but it should be closer to sixty–forty than eighty–twenty.

- Questions 41–45: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe **ruminating and second-guessing**. This pattern is like the hypervigilance experienced after a trauma. In a destructive relationship, we become conditioned to perpetually anticipate what is going to get us in trouble. We expect to be reprimanded or that unanticipated chaos will ensue. Until someone else convinces us our actions were adequate, we rehearse our words and actions to find what we did wrong. Chaos and crises have been so normal in our life, that not looking for them feels foolish.

- Questions 46–50: (Total: _____ in 5 questions)

  These questions describe **driven overachievement**. Sometimes the fear of man is very functional, at least for a while. We are so afraid of disappointing people and facing the ensuing consequences that we force ourselves to be excellent at everything we do. We do this at the expense of our basic self-care (review Step 1; see also bradhambrick.com/selfcare). Eventually we can't bear up under the emotional weight of our own elevated, self-imposed standard, so we collapse. Initially, we get mad at everyone who benefited from our drivenness. Then we feel guilty for being upset and start achieving again.

  Two very different authors make this point about living with unhealthy relational patterns. Ed Welch writes from a distinctively Christian perspective and focuses on the importance of our character becoming more like Jesus. Melody Beattie is the person who coined the term *codependency* and focuses on not surrendering our sense of personal agency to the hardship of destructive relationships. Yet both authors key in on this unexpected symptom of overachievement.

> Perhaps the most dangerous form of the fear of man is the "successful" fear of man. Such people think they have made it. —Ed Welch[iii]
>
> Being overly independent can be just as codependent as being too needy. Both behaviors are based on fear. —Melody Beattie[iv]

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[i] For an addiction assessment see www.bradhambrick.com/addiction. For an assessment of abusive behaviors see https://www.leslievernick.com/pdfs/Relationship-test.pdf or see Darby Strickland's book *Is It Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims* (P&R Publishing, 2020) for a detailed description of a variety of abusive patterns.

[ii] If you live outside the United States, this Wikipedia page (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_domestic_violence_hotlines) catalogs comparable domestic violence hotlines numbers in other countries.

[iii] Edward T. Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997), 17.

[iv] Melody Beattie, *The New Codependency* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 109.