IS IT ME OR IS IT THEM?

Start here before you look inward

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IS IT ME OR THEM?

My work is for people in relationships where they're treated well, and the doubt is about whether it's right. Use this sheet to check where you are. Notice that every green flag is about how they show up. Butterflies and never having doubts, aren't on the list.



GREEN FLAGS

Communication

When you share something you're struggling with, they're curious and want to understand
You can tell them something hard without bracing for punishment, sulking or silence (even if it still feels a bit hard to share)
After a disagreement they come back to repair it, even if it's a bit clumsy
They can say sorry and mean it
You can bring up the big stuff (kids, money, where you live) without it turning into a fight or being shut down

Effort and fairness

They show up for the boring stuff as well as the fun stuff
When you ask for something, they take it seriously, even if they can't always do it
Your plans, friends and family matter to them too

Connection

They're interested in your life, your work and your day
You can be your messy, unpolished self around them
Your friends and family feel at ease around them

Trust and the future

You both know what this relationship is (monogamous, open, whatever it is for you) without you having to guess
They do what they say they'll do, most of the time
You're broadly heading in the same direction on values and goals, expectations for family etc.
Some mismach is fine, but it's important that there is fair overlap

AMBER FLAGS

These aren't abuse, and they aren't all your stuff either. They deserve an honest conversation, and maybe support as a couple.



Communication

Every disagreement turns into the same fight, and nothing ever gets resolved
They get defensive whenever you bring something up, so you've stopped bringing things up
They'll talk about logistics all day but go quiet the moment you mention feelings
You only find out how they really feel when they've had a drink

Effort and fairness

You do most of the planning, remembering and organising, and you've asked for that to change and it hasn't
Your plans always give way to theirs: their work, their friends, their family
They keep promising to change something, and nothing happens
You've stopped asking for things because the answer is usually no

Connection

You feel more like housemates or business partners than a couple
Sex or affection has dropped away, and they won't talk about it
They're rarely curious about your life, your work or your day
You feel more like yourself when they're not around (pay attention to this one)

The future

They won't commit to a timeline on something that matters to you (moving in, marriage, children) and the goalposts keep moving
You've changed your plans to fit theirs, and it hasn't gone the other way
Their family or an ex keeps coming between you and they won't set a boundary

Trust

Small lies, about where they were or what they spent, even when the truth wouldn't matter
They're secretive with their phone in a new way
An affair or betrayal was "dealt with" but never really talked through

Their own stuff

They're struggling (low mood, stress, a habit) and won't get any support, so it all lands on you
They rely on you as their only source of support

RED FLAGS: WHAT ISN'T OK

If any of these are happening, please don't treat it as something to work on in yourself. You deserve support.



• Isolating you from friends and family
• Monitoring your time, your phone, your messages or your location
• Controlling where you go, whom you see or what you wear
• Controlling your money
• Repeatedly putting you down, humiliating or degrading you
• Threats or intimidation
• Screaming, name-calling, or sulking until you give in
• Making you doubt your own sanity
• Hurting you physically
• Pressuring you into anything sexual. If you agree because you're afraid or pressured, that isn't consent.
• You're afraid of how they'd react if you told them about your doubts
• The people who love you are worried about you
• They're lovely with everyone else and different behind closed doors. If what you see in private consistently doesn't match what others see, trust what you see.

One question that can help
Are you frightened of him, or frightened of the relationship?
If you're changing how you behave because you're scared of how he'll react, if you're walking on eggshells, that's really important information. And it's about them.

Based on Women's Aid guidance on coercive control and domestic abuse.

WHERE TO GET HELP

• **National Domestic Abuse Helpline (run by Refuge):** 0808 2000 247. Free and confidential, 24 hours a day. Live chat at nationaldahelpline.org.uk
• **In an emergency**: call 999
• **Women's Aid**: womensaid.org.uk
• **To find a therapist:** the BACP (bacp.co.uk) and UKCP (psychotherapy.org.uk) directories
• **Outside the UK:** please contact your local domestic abuse service

This sheet is a starting point, not a diagnosis

One red flag matters more than any number of green ones. If anything on the red list is happening, please start there. If you ticked amber, take it seriously alongside your own work. Mostly green with nothing in red? Then there's a really good chance what you're feeling is coming from inside you, and that's something you can work with. It says nothing bad about you. Usually it's a part of you trying very hard to keep you safe.