

Are you in a relationship with a psychopath? You might think that's something you'd know right away by the red tint of evil in the person's eyes, the swastika tat on the forehead, or the insistence on discussing serial killers over dinner. But nope! Psychopaths can be extremely charming and come across like Prince Charming at first. So unless you [know the signs](#), you'd probably get sucked into the life of a psychopath and not know who he or she really was until you are completely sucker punched. Here are 10 signs you should look out for to quickly identify a psychopath.

1. [Flattery](#) like you've never heard before. Psychopaths move extremely quickly. On the first date, he'll probably tell you that you are stunningly beautiful, unbelievably intelligent, and uproariously witty. He will play into every fantasy and insecurity you have. If you think you're fat, he will tell you how much he loves your body. If you think you're shy, he will laugh at every lame attempt at a joke and tell you you should have been a comedian. This is called "love bombing." It's the idealization phase he gets you hooked on, and it's the phase you will spend the next however-many months or years trying to get back once he abruptly shuts it off.

2. [He is just like you.](#) Psychopaths will try to convince you that you are soul mates, just alike. He loves all the things you love and you have all of the same interests. If you had a tough childhood, he will say something like, "We both had it rough. That's why we understand each other." If there's an obscure book you love, he will make sure he loves it too. What he's doing is called "mirroring." He has no real identity, so he sucks yours up and mirrors it back to you.

3. [Pity plays.](#) Pay careful attention to what a psychopath says on the first few dates about his exes and other people in his life. Is his ex girlfriend crazy and stalking him? Did another girlfriend rob him blind? Is his mother controlling and horrible? Does he seem like he's had a tough time with people, who always use and abandon him? Whatever he says about the other people in his life is pretty much exactly what he'll be saying about you at some point, so listen carefully.

4. Illnesses and injuries. Psychopaths absolutely love pity, so pay attention to how many illnesses and injuries he's had. Did he miraculously beat cancer but it could come back at any minute? Does he break his foot on your second date and has to cancel? (But strangely is okay for the third date?) Did he lose his first wife in a car accident that left him with brain trauma (yet he talks fine and seems fine)? Try to check out his stories -- call hospitals if you need to -- but don't be surprised if he has an excuse for why you can't find any record of any of his traumas.

5. [Great sex.](#) Everyone wants great sex, but those who have been with a psychopath often say it's the best thing they've ever experienced. A psychopath goes out of his way to please you. It's just another way of getting you hooked. Once he has you hooked, you'll find yourself begging for sex because he suddenly won't want it anymore.

6. Cracks in the mask. A psychopath will sometimes blurt out something odd about himself, apropos of nothing. Like you might be cooking dinner and suddenly he blurts, "I'm crazy you know." Or "I'm cheating on you." He will then either deny he said it or play it off as a joke. A form of keeping you off balance -- but also possibly an unconscious slip of the mask of his persona.

7. Silent treatment. Once psychopaths have you hooked after the "love bombing" and "idealization" phase, they then begin to devalue you. The first step in that is usually to give you the silent treatment over something. Psychopaths are also known to disappear for days at a time. Be sure, the silent treatment and disappearing act will be laid squarely at your feet. In reality, he is off sizing up his next target somewhere.

8. Triangulation. Psychopaths love to work you up into a state of obsessive frenzy, so to do that, they idealize you, give you fabulous sex, and then begin pulling away and "triangling." This is when they introduce other people into the mix to make you jealous. It could be an ex-wife or ex-girlfriend, a friend of the same sex, or even a celebrity. In the psychopaths mind, everyone else wants him, so you better be on your best behavior, or he will move on to one of his adoring fans.

9. Discard. The final phase of the psychopath is the "discard" phase. After he sucks you in with idealization, then begins to devalue you, he will suddenly discard you as if you never had a relationship. You are suddenly completely worthless to him. He will usually move on to another target at this point.

10. ["Hoovering."](#) Although a psychopath will discard you, he doesn't quite want you moving on either. If he senses you are done with him, he will suddenly do an about-face, and begin bombarding you with pleas to stay together. He will try to "Hoover" (named after the vacuum cleaning company) you back in by saying everything you've ever wanted to hear, making a million promises, and suddenly being on his absolute best behavior. It's all an act so he can get you back into the fold. The only way to get rid of a psychopath is to completely go no contact. It's the only thing that doesn't fuel his games and ego. He will make that difficult for you -- some psychopaths will stalk you, most will Hoover. But to engage him in any way, even just to tell him off, only leaves you open to more mind games, which he will win, because he has no feelings. (Those who have children with psychopaths must develop low contact, and keep in touch only as much as absolutely needed as regards the children.) Of course, nobody is perfect, and some people are just immature and go through periods of giving the silent treatment, or "devaluing" you with critical comments. Other people may triangulate to create jealousy because they're insecure or bored or don't even quite realize they're doing it. There are also plenty of garden-variety jerks out there who will engage in a lot of "psychopathic" behavior without being clinical psychopaths. But if your lover engages in much or all of this behavior, then he or she is likely psychopathic, and you should run for the hills! Have you ever been with a psychopath?