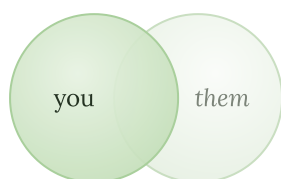


Recognising Manipulation

How much room do you have to be yourself?

Everyone tries to influence the people close to them. The clearest sign that influence has become manipulation or control isn't any single tactic. It's what happens to your space over time: whether you still have room to think, choose and say no.

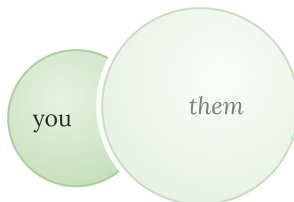


Everyday influence

ROOM FOR BOTH

Open, occasional and mutual. Either of you can say no, and the relationship carries on.

Reason Charm Reciprocity
Pleasure induction

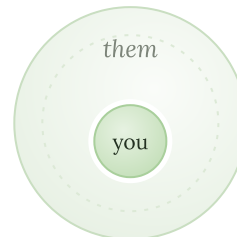


Manipulation

YOUR SPACE IS PRESSED ON

Indirect pressure that works around a genuine "no", until you give way to avoid guilt or silence.

Monetary reward Social comparison
Responsibility invocation Debasement
Regression Silent treatment



Coercive control

YOUR SPACE IS CONTAINED

Fear, force and monitoring. Over time, everyday choices stop feeling like yours to make.

Coercion Hardball + the patterns below

MORE ROOM

LESS ROOM

Tactics are placed for illustration. The same behaviour can shift along the line depending on how, and how often, it's used.

How often?

Once in a while A pattern

Which way?

Both ways Mostly one way

How do I feel?

Still free Smaller, afraid

Twelve Tactics Research Has Identified

From studies of couples, friends and families

● **Reason** explaining, arguing

● **Charm** warmth timed to a request

● **Reciprocity** calling in past favours

● **Pleasure induction** "it'll be fun for you"

● **Monetary reward** money or gifts in exchange

● **Social comparison** "everyone else would..."

● **Responsibility invocation** appeals to duty

● **Debasement** self-criticism that obliges

● **Regression** sulking, acting helpless

● **Silent treatment** withholding contact

● **Coercion** demands, anger, criticism

● **Hardball** threats, lies, violence

Patterns That Warrant Closer Attention

Linked with greater harm, especially as they repeat

Reality distortion

Denying things that happened, until you doubt your memory or perception.

Isolation

Discouraging or limiting contact with friends, family or other support.

Monitoring

Tracking your movements, messages, money or daily routine.

Intimidation

Anger, physical presence or implied danger used to create fear.

Escalating threats

Threats of harm, exposure, abandonment or other serious consequences.

Shrinking autonomy

A growing sense that everyday choices are no longer yours to make.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Is this a one-off, or does it keep happening?
- Can I say no without fearing what will happen next?
- Do I doubt my memory or judgement more than I used to?
- Over time, do I have more room to be myself, or less?

PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Keep brief, dated notes of specific incidents, somewhere private
- ✓ Talk it through with someone you trust outside the relationship
- ✓ Stay connected with friends, family and your own routines
- ✓ Speak with a psychologist or counsellor about your situation



If you are experiencing threats, intimidation, violence, stalking or sexual coercion, your safety comes first. Contact a domestic abuse helpline or a qualified professional, and call emergency services if you are in immediate danger. This page is educational and is not a risk assessment.