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The more you ask, the less you are likely to be told.

**IGNORING/BLANKING/  
STONEWALLING**

If you have ever tried to ring someone knowing they are there but they won't pick up the phone, then you know how this feels! Or maybe your texts are not being answered. Most of us have done this from time to time, but in conjunction with other controlling behaviour this means there is an issue. If the other person knows you are distressed or angry, they may use this to manipulate you to the point of giving in.

**SUBTLE BUT CONTINUOUS  
CRITICISM, SOMETIMES  
DESCRIBED AS 'JOKES'**

This is more of a narcissistic method of trying to control

someone by making them feel silly/inadequate/mad/bad/wrong in some way.

Maybe you recognise some of these as your own behaviour. Ask yourself when you felt out of control in your life. Ask what you needed at that time and didn't get: understanding, empathy, a hug, reassurance . . . Then gently explain to your partner/parent/child/friend where you think it comes from and ask them to help you feel safe. Help yourself feel safe in those situations by being kind and understanding, and imagining giving the child that was you what they needed.

If you are on the receiving end of a control freak, find out their background. Gently point out to them how that behaviour makes you feel.

If the behaviour is extreme, the chances are they won't admit to it or even see they are doing it as it will not be deliberate. All you can do then is gently give them instances and tell them the emotional impact on you and suggest they have some therapy or you have therapy together.

Sometimes it is necessary to exit that particular relationship. Especially if you find yourself constantly battling without resolution, feeling upset and frustrated and losing your temper. **LI**

**Harley Street Psychotherapy will be running a Self-Development Retreat in north Norfolk at the end of April. To find out more, email: [harleysttherapy@gmail.com](mailto:harleysttherapy@gmail.com)**