



## RESOURCE 2.3

# RED FLAGS VS. GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

HVL Connect Client Resource

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## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

**Purpose:** This resource helps you distinguish between genuine red flags (warning signs to heed) and growth opportunities (challenges that can be worked through).

### When to use this:

- You're dating and noticing concerning behaviors
- You're unsure if something is a deal-breaker
- You tend to ignore red flags OR see red flags everywhere
- You want to make wise decisions about who to invest in
- You're evaluating whether to continue dating someone
- You need clarity on what's acceptable vs. unacceptable

### What this resource provides:

- Clear definitions of red flags vs. yellow flags vs. green flags
- Comprehensive red flag categories
- Framework for evaluating concerns
- Decision-making tools
- Guidance on when to stay vs. when to go

**Important:** Trust your gut. If something feels wrong, it probably is.



# INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCERNMENT

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## Why This Matters

### MANY PEOPLE STRUGGLE WITH DISCERNMENT IN DATING:

#### Some ignore red flags:

- "Everyone has flaws"
- "I can fix them"
- "It's not that bad"
- "They'll change"
- "I'm being too picky"

**Result:** End up in unhealthy or incompatible relationships

#### Others see red flags everywhere:

- "Nobody's perfect"
- "Everyone has issues"
- "I'm too critical"
- "I'm self-sabotaging"
- "I'll never find anyone"

**Result:** Push away good people over minor issues

### HEALTHY DISCERNMENT MEANS:

- Recognizing genuine red flags and walking away
- Distinguishing between red flags and growth opportunities
- Accepting imperfection while maintaining standards
- Trusting your gut while being reasonable
- Making wise choices about who deserves your time

**This resource helps you develop healthy discernment.**



## Red, Yellow, and Green Flags

### UNDERSTANDING THE FLAG SYSTEM:

#### ► **RED FLAGS:**

- Serious warning signs
- Indicate unhealthy patterns or character issues
- Usually don't change
- Deal-breakers
- Walk away

#### ● **YELLOW FLAGS:**

- Concerns worth noting
- May be growth opportunities
- Require conversation and observation
- Could go either way
- Proceed with caution and awareness

#### ● **GREEN FLAGS:**

- Positive signs
- Indicate healthy patterns and character
- What you're looking for
- Invest here

**This resource focuses on distinguishing red from yellow.**



# PART 1: UNDERSTANDING RED FLAGS

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## What Makes Something a Red Flag

### **A RED FLAG IS:**

- A pattern, not a one-time mistake
- Indicative of character or values
- Unlikely to change without serious intervention
- Harmful to you or the relationship
- A violation of your core needs or values
- Something you can't accept long-term

### **A RED FLAG IS NOT:**

- A minor annoyance
- A difference in preference
- A one-time mistake they acknowledge and correct
- Something they're actively working on
- A growth area they're aware of and addressing

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## Categories of Red Flags

### **RED FLAGS FALL INTO CATEGORIES:**

1. **Respect and Treatment**
2. **Emotional Health and Availability**
3. **Honesty and Integrity**
4. **Compatibility and Values**
5. **Behavioral Patterns**
6. **Past Relationships**
7. **Lifestyle and Stability**
8. **Communication and Conflict**

**We'll explore each category in detail.**



## PART 2: RED FLAG CATEGORIES

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### Category 1: Respect and Treatment

#### ► MAJOR RED FLAGS:

##### **Disrespect toward you:**

- Dismisses your feelings or opinions
- Makes fun of you (not playful teasing, but hurtful)
- Belittles or criticizes you
- Talks down to you
- Doesn't value your time
- Ignores your boundaries
- Makes you feel small or stupid

##### **Disrespect toward others:**

- Rude to servers, staff, or service workers
- Talks badly about everyone
- Road rage or aggressive behavior
- Cruel to animals
- Disrespectful to their family (context matters)
- Treats people as beneath them

##### **Controlling behavior:**

- Tells you what to wear
- Controls who you see or talk to
- Checks your phone or demands passwords
- Isolates you from friends/family
- Makes all the decisions
- Gets angry when you have your own plans
- Tracks your location obsessively

##### **Jealousy and possessiveness:**

- Jealous of your friends, coworkers, or past
- Accuses you of cheating without cause
- Can't handle you talking to opposite sex
- Possessive ("you're mine")
- Monitors your social media obsessively

##### **Any form of abuse:**

- Physical violence or threats
- Verbal abuse (yelling, name-calling, insults)
- Emotional abuse (manipulation, gaslighting)
- Sexual coercion or pressure



- Financial control or abuse
- **These are IMMEDIATE deal-breakers. Leave.**

## ● **YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):**

### **Occasional insensitivity:**

- Says something thoughtless occasionally
  - Doesn't always pick up on your feelings
  - Can be blunt or direct in ways that hurt
- **Can be addressed if they're open to feedback and change**

### **Different communication styles:**

- More direct than you're used to
  - Less emotionally expressive
  - Different conflict styles
- **Can work if both are willing to adapt**

## ● **GREEN FLAGS:**

- ✓ Treats you with respect consistently
- ✓ Kind to everyone (servers, strangers, etc.)
- ✓ Respects your boundaries
- ✓ Values your opinions and feelings
- ✓ Makes you feel valued and appreciated
- ✓ Trusts you and gives you freedom
- ✓ Celebrates your successes
- ✓ Speaks kindly about you to others

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## Category 2: Emotional Health and Availability

### ► **MAJOR RED FLAGS:**

#### **Emotionally unavailable:**

- Can't or won't discuss feelings
- Shuts down when things get emotional
- Avoids vulnerability completely
- Keeps you at arm's length emotionally
- Won't let you in
- No emotional intimacy even after months



### **Unhealed trauma affecting relationship:**

- Severe trust issues they won't address
- Triggered constantly by normal relationship things
- Can't move past their past
- Refuses to get help for trauma
- Takes trauma out on you

### **Untreated mental health issues:**

- Severe depression or anxiety affecting functioning
- Refuses to get help
- Expects you to be their therapist
- Mental health issues harm you or relationship
- Won't take responsibility for their mental health

### **Emotional instability:**

- Extreme mood swings
- Explosive anger or rage
- Can't regulate emotions
- Emotional reactions are disproportionate
- You're walking on eggshells

### **Victim mentality:**

- Everything is someone else's fault
- Never takes responsibility
- Always the victim in every story
- Blames everyone else for their problems
- No accountability or self-awareness

### **Love-bombing:**

- Too much too soon
- Intense declarations of love early on
- Overwhelming attention and affection
- Talks about future (marriage, kids) immediately
- Feels too good to be true

→ **These indicate they're not ready for healthy relationship**

## **🟡 YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):**

### **Working on emotional health:**

- In therapy for past trauma
- Aware of their issues and actively working on them
- Communicates about their process
- Takes responsibility
- Progress is visible

→ **Can work if they're genuinely doing the work**



### **Less emotionally expressive:**

- Not as openly emotional as you
- Takes time to open up
- Shows love through actions more than words

→ **Can work if they're willing to meet you partway**

### **Past trauma they're healing:**

- Had difficult past but working through it
- Doesn't let it control current relationship
- Seeks help when needed
- Takes responsibility for their healing

→ **Can work with patience and boundaries**

### **GREEN FLAGS:**

- ✓ Emotionally available and present
- ✓ Can discuss feelings openly
- ✓ Vulnerable and authentic
- ✓ Takes responsibility for their emotions
- ✓ In therapy or has done personal work
- ✓ Emotionally regulated and stable
- ✓ Lets you in emotionally
- ✓ Healed from past or actively healing

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## **Category 3: Honesty and Integrity**

### **MAJOR RED FLAGS:**

#### **Lying:**

- Lies about big things
- Lies about small things frequently
- Caught in lies repeatedly
- Lies even when truth would be fine
- Defensive when caught
- Gaslights you about lying

#### **Deception:**

- Hides important information
- Omits truth to mislead
- Lives double life
- Cheats or has cheated (and isn't remorseful)
- Sneaky or secretive behavior



### **Lack of integrity:**

- Says one thing, does another
- Doesn't keep promises or commitments
- Cheats in other areas (work, taxes, etc.)
- No moral compass
- Justifies unethical behavior

### **Manipulation:**

- Twists your words
- Gaslights you (makes you doubt reality)
- Plays mind games
- Uses guilt or shame to control
- Manipulates to get their way

→ **These are character issues. Don't ignore.**

### **YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):**

#### **White lies or exaggerations:**

- Embellishes stories occasionally
- Small lies that don't really matter
- Lies to avoid conflict (not healthy, but not malicious)

→ **Address it. If they correct it, okay. If they continue, red flag.**

#### **Overly private:**

- Very private about certain things
- Takes time to open up
- Guarded about past

→ **Can be okay if they gradually open up. If secretive indefinitely, red flag.**

### **GREEN FLAGS:**

- ✓ Honest and transparent
- ✓ Keeps their word
- ✓ Admits mistakes and takes responsibility
- ✓ Integrity in all areas of life
- ✓ No games or manipulation
- ✓ Trustworthy and reliable
- ✓ What you see is what you get

## Category 4: Compatibility and Values

### ▶ MAJOR RED FLAGS:

#### Fundamental incompatibilities:

- One wants kids, one doesn't (and won't budge)
- One wants marriage, one never wants to marry
- Completely different life goals
- Incompatible lifestyles (one wants city, one wants rural)
- Religious differences that can't be bridged
- Political differences that affect core values

#### Different core values:

- Honesty vs. "white lies are fine"
- Family-oriented vs. family means nothing
- Ambition vs. no drive
- Generosity vs. extreme selfishness
- Growth-minded vs. fixed mindset
- Responsibility vs. blame

#### Fundamentally different relationship needs:

- One needs lots of quality time, other needs extreme independence
- One needs emotional intimacy, other can't provide it
- One needs affection, other is uncomfortable with touch
- Mismatched attachment styles that won't adapt

→ **These usually can't be compromised. Don't try to force it.**

### ● YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):

#### Different but not incompatible:

- Different hobbies or interests
- Different social needs (introvert/extrovert)
- Different communication styles
- Different backgrounds

→ **Can work with communication and compromise**

#### Unsure about big things:

- Not sure about kids yet (but open to discussion)
- Not sure about marriage timeline
- Still figuring out life goals

→ **Can work if you're both in exploration phase and communicating**



## ● GREEN FLAGS:

- ✓ Aligned on big things (kids, marriage, location, lifestyle)
- ✓ Shared core values
- ✓ Compatible life goals
- ✓ Similar relationship needs
- ✓ Can compromise on differences
- ✓ Both willing to work toward shared vision

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## Category 5: Behavioral Patterns

### ▶ MAJOR RED FLAGS:

#### **Active addiction:**

- Substance abuse (drugs, alcohol)
- Behavioral addiction (gambling, pornography)
- Not in recovery or denying problem
- Addiction affecting their life and relationships
- Refuses to get help

#### **Irresponsible or reckless:**

- Constantly in crisis
- Makes terrible decisions repeatedly
- No regard for consequences
- Reckless with money, health, safety
- Chaotic life

#### **Criminal behavior:**

- History of violence
- Illegal activities
- Arrests or legal troubles (context matters)
- No remorse or change

#### **Infidelity pattern:**

- Cheated in every relationship
- Cheated on you
- No remorse or accountability
- Blames partners for their cheating

#### **Explosive anger:**

- Punches walls or breaks things
- Screams or rages
- Threatens violence
- Can't control temper



- Scares you

→ **These are serious. Don't excuse them.**

## ● **YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):**

### **Past addiction, now in recovery:**

- Sober and working a program
- Takes recovery seriously
- Accountable and self-aware
- Stable in recovery (1+ years)

→ **Can work if they're committed to recovery**

### **Past mistakes they've learned from:**

- Made poor choices in past
- Took responsibility and changed
- Different person now
- Shows growth and maturity

→ **People can change. Look for evidence of real change.**

### **Occasional poor judgment:**

- Makes impulsive decisions sometimes
- Not always responsible
- Learning and growing

→ **If they're young and growing, can be okay. If pattern continues, red flag.**

## ● **GREEN FLAGS:**

- ✓ Responsible and reliable
- ✓ Stable life and good judgment
- ✓ No addiction or in solid recovery
- ✓ Emotionally regulated
- ✓ Learns from mistakes
- ✓ Accountable for their choices

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## Category 6: Past Relationships

### ► **MAJOR RED FLAGS:**

#### **Not over their ex:**

- Still in love with ex
- Talks about ex constantly
- Compares you to ex



- Still in contact inappropriately
- Hasn't processed the breakup

#### **Bitter about all exes:**

- Every ex is "crazy" or "terrible"
- Blames all exes for everything
- No accountability for their part
- Talks badly about everyone they've dated

#### **Pattern of toxic relationships:**

- Every relationship was abusive or toxic
- Drawn to drama and chaos
- No healthy relationships ever
- Repeats same patterns

#### **Recently out of serious relationship:**

- Just ended long-term relationship or marriage
- Hasn't processed or healed
- Rebound situation
- Not emotionally available

#### **Cheated on everyone:**

- Pattern of infidelity
- No remorse or change
- Justifies cheating

→ **These indicate they're not ready or not healthy for relationship**

### **🟡 YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):**

#### **Healing from past relationship:**

- Recently single but doing the work
- Processing the breakup
- In therapy
- Self-aware about needing time
- Honest about where they are

→ **Can work if they're genuinely healing and you're patient**

#### **One or two difficult relationships:**

- Had a toxic relationship in past
- Learned from it
- Did healing work
- Different now

→ **We all have relationship history. Look for growth.**

#### **Still friendly with some exes:**

- Healthy boundaries with exes
- Mature and respectful



- You're the priority
  - No inappropriate contact
- **Can be a green flag if handled maturely**

### **GREEN FLAGS:**

- ✓ Healed from past relationships
- ✓ Takes responsibility for their part
- ✓ Learned and grew from past
- ✓ Speaks respectfully about exes
- ✓ Clear about what they want now
- ✓ Emotionally available
- ✓ No baggage affecting current relationship

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## Category 7: Lifestyle and Stability

### **MAJOR RED FLAGS:**

#### **Financial irresponsibility:**

- Chronic unemployment with no plan
- Terrible with money consistently
- Expects you to support them
- Gambles or spends recklessly
- Massive debt with no plan to address it
- Mooches off others

#### **Unstable living situation:**

- Homeless or couch-surfing
- Lives with ex-partner
- Can't hold down housing
- Chaotic living situation

#### **No direction or ambition:**

- No goals or plans
- No motivation to improve life
- Content with dysfunction
- Expects life to happen to them
- No effort toward growth

#### **Incompatible lifestyle:**

- Party lifestyle when you want stability
- Workaholic when you need quality time
- Nomadic when you want roots



- Completely different daily life

### **Illegal activities:**

- Dealing drugs
- Stealing
- Fraud
- Other criminal behavior

→ **These affect your life and future. Don't ignore.**

## **YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):**

### **Temporary instability:**

- Between jobs but actively looking
- Career transition
- Recovering from setback
- Has plan and taking action

→ **Can work if they're responsible and working toward stability**

### **Different financial values:**

- Spender vs. saver
- Different priorities
- Different upbringing around money

→ **Can work with communication and compromise**

### **Different pace of life:**

- One is busier than the other
- Different work schedules
- Different energy levels

→ **Can work if you find balance**

## **GREEN FLAGS:**

- ✓ Financially responsible
- ✓ Stable employment or career
- ✓ Has goals and works toward them
- ✓ Stable living situation
- ✓ Compatible lifestyle
- ✓ Takes care of responsibilities
- ✓ Plans for future



## Category 8: Communication and Conflict

### ▶ **MAJOR RED FLAGS:**

#### **Refuses to communicate:**

- Stonewalls (shuts down completely)
- Won't discuss issues
- Avoids all conflict
- Silent treatment
- Walks away from conversations

#### **Poor conflict resolution:**

- Yells, screams, or rages
- Name-calls or insults
- Brings up past constantly
- Never resolves anything
- Escalates instead of de-escalates
- Blames you for everything

#### **Defensive and can't take feedback:**

- Can never be wrong
- Turns everything around on you
- Can't hear criticism or feedback
- Makes excuses for everything
- Never apologizes or takes responsibility

#### **Gaslighting:**

- Makes you doubt your reality
- Denies things they said or did
- Twists your words
- Makes you feel crazy
- Rewrites history

#### **Passive-aggressive:**

- Says one thing, does another
- Punishes through withdrawal or sabotage
- Won't address issues directly
- Sulks or pouts
- Gives backhanded compliments

→ **These make healthy relationship impossible**

### ● **YELLOW FLAGS (PROCEED WITH CAUTION):**

#### **Conflict-avoidant:**

- Uncomfortable with conflict



- Needs time to process
- Shuts down when overwhelmed
- Working on communication skills

→ **Can work if they're willing to learn and grow**

**Different communication style:**

- More direct or less direct than you
- Processes differently (internal vs. external)
- Different conflict approach

→ **Can work with patience and adaptation**

**Gets defensive sometimes:**

- Occasionally defensive
- Can usually hear feedback
- Working on it
- Apologizes when wrong

→ **We all get defensive sometimes. Look for willingness to work on it.**

### **GREEN FLAGS:**

- ✓ Communicates openly and honestly
- ✓ Addresses issues calmly
- ✓ Can handle conflict maturely
- ✓ Takes responsibility
- ✓ Apologizes sincerely
- ✓ Listens and validates
- ✓ Works toward resolution
- ✓ Can take feedback without defensiveness
- ✓ Repairs after conflict



## PART 3: EVALUATING CONCERNS

### The Red Flag Evaluation Framework

#### WHEN YOU NOTICE SOMETHING CONCERNING:

##### STEP 1: IDENTIFY IT

What specifically concerns you?

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##### STEP 2: CATEGORIZE IT

Is this:

- ☐ Red flag (serious, character-based, pattern)
- ☐ Yellow flag (concerning, worth watching)
- ☐ Green flag (actually positive)
- ☐ Personal preference (not a flag, just different)

##### STEP 3: ASSESS PATTERN

Is this:

- ☐ One-time occurrence
- ☐ Occasional pattern
- ☐ Consistent pattern
- ☐ Escalating pattern

**One-time = give grace. Pattern = pay attention.**

##### STEP 4: EVALUATE RESPONSE

When you addressed it, did they:

- ☐ Acknowledge and apologize
- ☐ Get defensive or dismissive
- ☐ Make excuses or blame you
- ☐ Change their behavior
- ☐ Repeat the behavior

**Response tells you a lot.**



## STEP 5: CHECK YOUR GUT

What does your intuition say?

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**Trust your gut. It knows.**

## STEP 6: DECIDE

Based on above:

- ☐ This is a red flag. I'm walking away.
- ☐ This is a yellow flag. I'm watching carefully.
- ☐ This is a growth opportunity. We'll work on it.
- ☐ This is not actually a concern.

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## Questions to Ask Yourself

### WHEN EVALUATING A CONCERN:

#### About the behavior:

- Is this a pattern or one-time thing?
- Is this getting better or worse?
- Does this violate my core values or needs?
- Could I accept this long-term?
- Is this harmful to me or the relationship?

#### About their response:

- Do they acknowledge the issue?
- Do they take responsibility?
- Are they willing to change?
- Have they changed when they said they would?
- Do they get defensive or dismissive?

#### About my feelings:

- How does this make me feel?
- Am I making excuses for them?
- Am I ignoring my gut?
- Am I hoping they'll change?
- Do I feel safe and respected?



### About the relationship:

- Is this relationship healthy overall?
- Are there multiple red flags?
- Do the green flags outweigh the concerns?
- Am I happy more than I'm unhappy?
- Is this relationship good for me?

**Your honest answers guide your decision.**

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## Red Flag vs. Growth Opportunity

### HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE:

#### IT'S A RED FLAG IF:

- It's a character issue (dishonesty, disrespect, cruelty)
- It's a pattern, not a one-time mistake
- They're defensive and won't acknowledge it
- They blame you or make excuses
- It violates your core values or needs
- It's harmful to you
- It's not changing despite conversations
- Your gut says it's serious

→ **Walk away. This won't get better.**

#### IT'S A GROWTH OPPORTUNITY IF:

- It's a skill deficit, not character issue
- It's occasional, not a pattern
- They acknowledge it and take responsibility
- They're willing to work on it
- You see genuine effort and progress
- It doesn't violate core values or needs
- It's not harmful, just imperfect
- Your gut says they're a good person working on growth

→ **This can be worked through with communication and effort.**

### EXAMPLES:

#### Red Flag:

They yell and call you names during arguments. When you address it, they say you're too sensitive and it's your fault for making them angry.



→ This is abuse and blame-shifting. Leave.

**Growth Opportunity:**

They raise their voice when frustrated. When you address it, they apologize, acknowledge it's not okay, and work on staying calm. You see improvement.

→ This is someone learning better conflict skills. Can work.

**Red Flag:**

They lie about where they were and who they were with. When caught, they lie more and gaslight you.

→ This is dishonesty and manipulation. Leave.

**Growth Opportunity:**

They told a white lie to avoid conflict. When you address it, they apologize and commit to honesty even when uncomfortable. They follow through.

→ This is someone learning to communicate better. Can work.

**Red Flag:**

They're emotionally unavailable and won't discuss feelings. When you bring it up, they say you're too needy and they'll never change.

→ This is incompatibility and unwillingness to work on it. Leave.

**Growth Opportunity:**

They're not naturally emotionally expressive but want to work on it. They're in therapy, reading books, and making effort. You see progress.

→ This is someone growing. Can work.

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## When Multiple Flags Are Present

### ONE RED FLAG = SERIOUS CONCERN

### MULTIPLE RED FLAGS = LEAVE

**If you're seeing:**

- Disrespect + dishonesty
- Emotional unavailability + poor communication
- Controlling behavior + jealousy
- Addiction + instability
- Multiple red flags in different categories

→ **This is not a healthy person or relationship. Leave.**

**Don't try to fix someone with multiple red flags. It won't work.**



## PART 4: COMMON MISTAKES

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### Ignoring Red Flags

#### COMMON REASONS PEOPLE IGNORE RED FLAGS:

##### **"Everyone has flaws"**

- True, but red flags aren't just flaws
- Red flags are serious warning signs
- Don't confuse imperfection with dysfunction

##### **"I can fix them"**

- You can't fix anyone
- They have to want to change
- You're not their therapist or parent

##### **"They'll change for me"**

- People change for themselves, not for others
- If they're not changing now, they won't later
- Love doesn't fix character issues

##### **"It's not that bad"**

- If you're minimizing, it's probably bad
- Trust your gut
- Don't gaslight yourself

##### **"I'm afraid of being alone"**

- Being alone is better than being in unhealthy relationship
- You deserve better
- The right person is out there

##### **"I've already invested so much time"**

- Sunk cost fallacy
- Don't waste more time on wrong person
- Cut your losses

##### **"Maybe I'm being too picky"**

- Having standards isn't being picky
- Red flags are legitimate concerns
- Don't lower your standards



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## Seeing Red Flags Everywhere

### **SOME PEOPLE SEE RED FLAGS IN EVERYTHING:**

#### **This happens when:**

- You're not healed from past hurt
- You're protecting yourself from vulnerability
- You're self-sabotaging
- You have trust issues
- You're looking for reasons to run

#### **Signs you're doing this:**

- Every person has "red flags"
- You find reasons to reject everyone
- Friends say you're too critical
- You focus on flaws instead of whole person
- You're never willing to give anyone a chance

#### **If this is you:**

- Work with therapist on trust and vulnerability
- Distinguish between red flags and imperfections
- Practice giving people a chance (3-date rule)
- Focus on green flags too, not just red
- Address your fear of intimacy



## PART 5: DECISION-MAKING TOOLS

### The Red Flag Worksheet

#### USE THIS WHEN EVALUATING A CONCERN:

**The concern:**

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**Category:**

- ☐ Respect/Treatment
- ☐ Emotional Health
- ☐ Honesty/Integrity
- ☐ Compatibility/Values
- ☐ Behavioral Patterns
- ☐ Past Relationships
- ☐ Lifestyle/Stability
- ☐ Communication/Conflict

**Frequency:**

- ☐ One-time
- ☐ Occasional
- ☐ Frequent pattern
- ☐ Constant

**Their response when addressed:**

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**Is this changing or staying the same?**

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**My gut feeling:**

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### Is this a red flag or growth opportunity?

- ☐ Red flag - I should leave
- ☐ Yellow flag - proceed with caution
- ☐ Growth opportunity - we can work on this
- ☐ Not actually a concern

### My decision:

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## The Deal-Breaker Checklist

### CHECK IF ANY OF THESE ARE PRESENT:

- ☐ Any form of abuse (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual)
- ☐ Active addiction they won't address
- ☐ Chronic dishonesty or deception
- ☐ Cheating or infidelity
- ☐ Disrespect or contempt
- ☐ Controlling or jealous behavior
- ☐ Emotional unavailability they won't work on
- ☐ Fundamental incompatibility (kids, marriage, values)
- ☐ Pattern of toxic relationships
- ☐ Refuses to communicate or work on issues
- ☐ Makes you feel unsafe
- ☐ Multiple red flags

**If you checked ANY of these: This is not the right person. Leave.**

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## The Green Flag Checklist

### ALSO LOOK FOR GREEN FLAGS:

- ☐ Treats you with respect and kindness
- ☐ Honest and trustworthy
- ☐ Emotionally available and vulnerable
- ☐ Good communicator
- ☐ Handles conflict maturely
- ☐ Takes responsibility and apologizes
- ☐ Aligned on big things (values, goals, lifestyle)



- ☐ Stable and responsible
- ☐ Supportive of your growth
- ☐ Makes you feel good about yourself
- ☐ You feel safe and comfortable
- ☐ Consistent words and actions
- ☐ Introduces you to friends/family
- ☐ Talks about future with you
- ☐ Shows up for you

**The more green flags, the better.**

**Green flags should significantly outweigh any yellow flags.**

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## The Gut Check

**YOUR GUT KNOWS. LISTEN TO IT.**

**Ask yourself:**

**Do I feel safe with this person?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

**Do I trust this person?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not yet, but building

**Do I feel respected and valued?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

**Am I happy more than I'm unhappy?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ About equal

**Do I feel like myself with them?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

**Does this relationship feel healthy?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

**Am I making excuses for them?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Would I want my best friend to date someone like this?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

**If I could see the future, would I want this relationship?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

**If you answered "no" or "sometimes" to most of these, pay attention.  
Your gut is telling you something.**



## PART 6: WHEN TO STAY VS. WHEN TO GO

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### When to Give It a Chance

#### **STAY AND WORK ON IT IF:**

- ❑ Green flags significantly outweigh concerns
- ❑ Concerns are growth opportunities, not red flags
- ❑ They acknowledge issues and work on them
- ❑ You see genuine progress
- ❑ Core compatibility exists
- ❑ You feel safe and respected
- ❑ Communication is good or improving
- ❑ You're both committed to growth
- ❑ Your gut says this is a good person
- ❑ You're happy more than you're unhappy

**These relationships are worth investing in.**

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### When to Walk Away

#### **LEAVE IF:**

- ❑ Any form of abuse is present
- ❑ Multiple red flags exist
- ❑ They won't acknowledge or work on issues
- ❑ No progress despite conversations
- ❑ Fundamental incompatibilities exist
- ❑ You feel unsafe or disrespected
- ❑ They're not emotionally available
- ❑ Chronic dishonesty or deception
- ❑ Your gut says something is wrong
- ❑ You're unhappy more than you're happy
- ❑ You're making excuses for them
- ❑ Your friends and family are concerned
- ❑ You're losing yourself in the relationship
- ❑ Core values don't align
- ❑ They blame you for everything

**Don't waste time on wrong person. You deserve better.**



## How to Leave

### IF YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE:

#### **Be clear and direct:**

"This isn't working for me. I don't see us as compatible long-term. I'm ending this relationship."

#### **Don't over-explain:**

- You don't owe lengthy justification
- Keep it simple and clear
- Don't get drawn into debate

#### **Be firm:**

- Don't leave door open if you're done
- Don't give false hope
- Mean what you say

#### **Be kind but honest:**

- You can be respectful while being clear
- Don't be cruel, but don't sugarcoat
- Honesty is kindness

#### **Protect yourself:**

- If they're abusive, you may need to leave differently (safety first)
- Block if necessary
- Lean on support system
- Don't go back

#### **Your script:**

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## PART 7: TRUSTING YOUR DISCERNMENT

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### Building Discernment Skills

#### **DISCERNMENT IMPROVES WITH:**

##### **Experience:**

- The more you date, the better you get at reading people
- You learn what works and what doesn't
- You recognize patterns faster

##### **Self-awareness:**

- Know your patterns (Resource 2.1)
- Know your triggers
- Know your values and needs
- Know your gut feelings

##### **Feedback:**

- Listen to trusted friends and family
- They see things you might miss
- Get outside perspective

##### **Reflection:**

- After each date or relationship, reflect
- What did you learn?
- What would you do differently?
- What patterns do you notice?

##### **Trust:**

- Trust your gut
- Trust your experience
- Trust your judgment
- Trust that you know what's right for you

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### Your Discernment Commitment

#### **I COMMIT TO:**

- ☐ Paying attention to red flags
- ☐ Not ignoring my gut
- ☐ Distinguishing between red flags and growth opportunities
- ☐ Walking away from red flags
- ☐ Giving genuine growth opportunities a chance



- ☐ Not making excuses for unacceptable behavior
- ☐ Trusting my judgment
- ☐ Seeking support when unsure
- ☐ Prioritizing my well-being
- ☐ Believing I deserve healthy love

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



# REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

## Your Red Flag History

### LOOKING AT PAST RELATIONSHIPS:

Red flags I ignored:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Why I ignored them:

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What I'll do differently now:

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Red flags I'll never ignore again:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Your Current Situation

### IF YOU'RE CURRENTLY DATING SOMEONE:

Concerns I have:

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Are these red flags or growth opportunities?

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**Green flags I see:**

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**My gut feeling:**

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**My decision:**

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**Action I'll take:**

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## Your Future Dating

### GOING FORWARD:

**Red flags I'll watch for:**

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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4. 

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5. 

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**Green flags I'm looking for:**

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**How I'll evaluate concerns:**

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**Who I'll consult for perspective:**

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**How I'll trust my gut:**

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# FINAL REMINDERS

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## Red Flags Are Information

### RED FLAGS ARE GIFTS.

**They tell you:**

- This person isn't right for you
- This relationship won't be healthy
- You need to protect yourself
- You deserve better

**Don't ignore the information. Use it.**

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## You Deserve Green Flags

### YOU DESERVE:

- Respect and kindness
- Honesty and integrity
- Emotional availability
- Good communication
- Compatibility
- Stability
- Someone who treats you well
- Healthy, fulfilling love

**Don't settle for less.**

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## Trust Yourself

### YOU KNOW MORE THAN YOU THINK.

**Your gut knows:**

- When something is wrong
- When someone is right
- When to stay
- When to go

**Trust it. Honor it. Follow it.**



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## Discernment Is a Skill

### YOU'LL GET BETTER AT THIS.

#### With each experience:

- You'll recognize red flags faster
- You'll trust your gut more
- You'll make wiser choices
- You'll find better matches

**Be patient with yourself. You're learning.**

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## The Right Person Has Green Flags

### THE RIGHT PERSON FOR YOU:

- Won't have major red flags
- Will have lots of green flags
- Will work on growth opportunities with you
- Will make you feel safe and valued
- Will be worth the wait

**Keep looking. They're out there.**

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## NEXT STEPS

### AFTER COMPLETING THIS RESOURCE:

- Review your past relationships for red flags you ignored
- Commit to not ignoring red flags going forward
- Use evaluation framework when concerns arise
- Trust your gut
- Seek support when unsure
- Complete Resource 2.4: Preparing for Healthy Partnership
- Discuss red flags and concerns in coaching sessions



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## ABOUT HVL CONNECT

**Dante Yigael, Certified Life & Relationship Coach**

**Specializations:**

- Dating Coaching
- Relationship Pattern Recognition
- Healthy Relationship Building
- Discernment and Boundary Setting

**Approach:**

- Evidence-based and practical
- Supportive and non-judgmental
- Focused on your well-being
- Helps you trust your judgment

**Contact:**

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Website: [www.hvlconnect.com](http://www.hvlconnect.com)

**Trust your gut. Honor your standards. Choose wisely.  
You deserve someone with green flags, not red ones.**