

Most Dangerous Relationship Mistakes of Career and Take-Charge Women

Like many of the strong, no-nonsense women in the research, Amber came from a broken and unloving family. She blamed herself for her parents' divorce and thought if she had been more important, then her critical father would not have left. Her last memory was his scowling at her for not getting all A's. Critical parents and divorced parents can make even the smartest cookie fear relationship break ups and feel flawed.

The best relationship advice for women with this background is to recognize that their families' words and behaviors are expressions of how the parents felt about themselves—not about the children. Practice repeating in the mirror often: "It's not about me. It's not true of me. It's about them and their problems."

Mistake #2: Control Freaks: From Talk-the-talk--but Not Walk-the-walk

Because Amber secretly felt damaged, she experienced small mistakes as mortal blows. Many capable women strive for perfection and believe control prevents unhappy endings. They often avoid asking for help because it activates fears of being controlled or found wrong and weak. In their careers, they're proud to be seen as take-charge women. Co-workers detested Amber's micro-managing and described her as a person who could dish it out but not take it. She was a secret fraud who could talk the talk but not walk the walk.

To lessen the need for self-protection, build comfort with shortcomings by engaging in activities where mistakes are inevitable. When Amber took line-dancing lessons, she discovered that looking foolish was not so bad. Her confidence allowed her to drop her guard in other areas. Now she could walk the walk.

Mistake #3: Dangerous Love Flips: From Meek Men to Mean Men

Women with emotional scars from unloving families often flip back and forth between men they control or men they over-please. Amber chose an ineffective husband in the hope that he would be too weak to find fault with her or leave. When the disappointment in a pliable man becomes too high, like Amber, many strong women choose a man of charm, status and power. Too late these take-charge women discover that the man's sense of authority turned to authoritarianism and domestic violence. Amber's self-worth was so low that she allowed herself to over-value the man and buckle to his demands and abuse.

Smart relationship advice is to recognize the hidden danger of dating flips. If a woman has chosen a good but weak man, she should make a list of the positive characteristics that made her choose the man in the first place. Understanding her partner's family background allows her to develop non-critical ways of helping him overcome his fears. The goal is to create a warm emotional environment of mutual aid so they can fall in love again.

Mistake #4: Seeking affairs: From Grass is Greener on the Other Side to Rotten

Like some of the capable women, Amber fantasized that having an affair would prevent her from feeling depressed. At first, it was exciting, but that high soon gave way to torment. Amber could not risk divorce, and she held on to her husband as back up in case the affair did not work out. Smart love does not include affairs. Women should regard extra-relationship behaviors and thoughts as warning signs and seek professional help.

Mistake #5: Starving for Love: From Imperfect Self to Perfect Body

The more unhappy Amber became, the more she relied on misguided ways of making herself perfect for her lover. Since she over-valued her new man, Amber believed she had to bolster her under-value of herself by becoming too thin. Like other women in the study, Amber ate a "prison diet" of lettuce, celery, water, coffee and a small amount of grain.

The best solutions are to regard calorie restriction and excessive exercising as a major warning sign and to ignore friends' compliments and photos of supermodels. Women need to accept their body's natural limitations and aim instead for their unique healthy weight and body mass index.

Mistake #6: Emotional Meltdowns and Suicide: From Top of the World to Bottom of the Pit

The first time Amber's new man broke up with her, she had a meltdown. She couldn't sleep or think and almost got fired when she dropped the ball on an important career project. She was shocked at her reaction--she thought she was stronger. The second time her lover broke up with her,

he said it was for good. He found someone else. And thatâ€™s when Amber tried to kill herself. Smart women can end up at the end of their emotional rope, too, because they underestimate their need for love from a man.

If Amber had paid attention to her dissatisfaction, depression and thoughts of suicide, she might have sought counseling. But many of todayâ€™s women are too afraid to face their sense of shame shock at being so out of control in their lives. True strong-minded women can avoid this mistake if they respect these crucial warning signs and seek professional relationship advice. A Smart Cookie is an Emotionally Brave Cookie.

About the Author

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If you would like to participate in the research for this book project or would like her to speak at your event, contact her through her website at www.lovevictory.com or call 941.363.0505.

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