

RULES OF PEOPLE WHO BATTER

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Batterers create and enforce rules for their partners about issues important to them. The rules change as circumstances change. Batterers clarify the particulars of each rule. They use various tactics to enforce the rules, some coercive, but not physical, and others physically violent. Batterers calculate how to enforce rules without incurring social and legal consequences.

Overarching rules

1. I make the rules.
2. I am entitled to your obedience, service, affection, loyalty, fidelity and undivided attention.
3. You cannot leave this relationship unless I am through with you.
4. You may not tell anyone about my violence or coercive controls.

Rules for social conduct

1. You will not have contact with your mother, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers without my permission.
2. You will not work, attend school or church, engage in sports, join women's clubs (e.g. book, cooking), participate in childcare coops, or undertake any other activities without my consent.
3. When we are out in public, you may not speak with anyone unless I give you permission to do so.
4. When we are with friends, family, co-workers and, for example, when we are dancing in public, you will look at me adoringly and never question anything I say.
5. You may not use the internet without my permission.

Rules for sexual servicing

1. You will comply with my sexual requirements as to time, place and activity.
2. You will not complain if I have sex with you when you are asleep.
3. Safe sex is an option only if I choose it.
4. We will have children if I want them.

5. You may not or must use contraceptives, as I instruct; and you are responsible for acquiring any contraceptive device that I decide should be used.
6. You will not complain about painful sex.

Rules for maintaining the household

1. I will eat what, when and where I desire.
2. You will prepare my food to meet my specifications.
3. The house must be spotless at all times; and I periodically will use the "white glove" test to assess your compliance.
4. You must keep the children quiet whenever I insist; they always must be quiet when I am sleeping or watching television.
5. You will wash my clothes first and separately. All of my clothes must be ironed. You will not otherwise wash clothes more than once a week.

Economic rules

1. Your paycheck and mine will be spent at my direction.
2. You will live on the allowance that I deem sufficient. If you think that you need more, furnish me with receipts for your expenditures and the rationale for additional funds.
3. The children will have an allowance if there is any money left over.
4. You are responsible for paying the bills and are expected to make the money stretch to cover all of them.
5. You may not have a credit card.
6. You may not have a cell phone.
7. You may use the car only with my permission.

Rules to protect me from social and legal accountability

1. Should anyone criticize me, you will say that you are to blame for my "alleged" failing.
2. My status in the community is paramount; you will act accordingly.
3. You will always accept culpability; should the police come to our house, you must say that you provoked my behavior and/or you started the conflict.

The listing is merely exemplary of the range and content of rules generated by batterers to establish, maintain, demonstrate or re-assert their "legitimate power and control" over their partners. Batterers similarly develop rules for their children and any other children in the household.