

“Am I being manipulated?”

If you're asking, something already feels off. Feelings aren't proof — but they are data. Count how many of these are true of one specific relationship (partner, parent, friend, boss). Be honest; nobody's watching.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I apologize a lot without being sure what I did. | <input type="checkbox"/> I feel articulate everywhere except with this one person. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I rehearse conversations with them in advance to make myself “un-attackable.” | <input type="checkbox"/> “Everyone” supposedly agrees with them about me — but never says so to my face. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I often leave conversations confused about what actually happened. | <input type="checkbox"/> I can't predict which version of them I'll get today. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Their version of events replaces mine within hours — even when I was there. | <input type="checkbox"/> My other friendships have quietly thinned out since this person arrived. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindness from them reliably arrives just before a request. | <input type="checkbox"/> I make decisions at their speed, not mine — everything is urgent. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saying “no” costs me days of sulking, silence, or atmosphere. | <input type="checkbox"/> I keep a running ledger of what I owe them. They never seem to owe me. |

0–2 · Normal friction.

Every relationship has some.
Keep the sheet anyway.

3–5 · Pattern worth watching.

Start a private, dated log.
Patterns beat incidents.

6+ · Take this seriously.

See the flip side — and if you ever feel unsafe: 1-800-799-7233 (thehotline.org).

THE 10-SECOND X-RAY — RUN IT IN ANY CONVERSATION

1. Name the feeling (guilty? rushed? confused? flattered?) — manufactured emotion arrives suddenly, at their convenience. · **2. Name the string** — authority, consensus, urgency, disclosure, identity, or obligation. · **3. The stranger test** — if a stranger said this exact sentence, what would you call it? Answer, *then* respond.

The six strings anyone can pull

Every manipulation tactic — from a guilt-tripping relative to a scam call to an engineered news feed — pulls some mix of six strings. Naming the string is half the defense.

◆ Authority Deference

“As your boss / the bank / someone older and wiser...” — borrowed rank in place of reasons.
Counter: rank is not evidence. Ask for the reason itself.

◎ Consensus Pull

“Everyone agrees / everyone’s doing it.” Invisible juries, printed crowds. **Counter:** ask who, specifically. Manufactured consensus dies on contact.

▲ Urgency Reflex

“Decide now or lose it.” Speed exists to outrun your thinking. **Counter:** “I’ll answer tomorrow.” Whatever punishes waiting was a trap.

■ Disclosure Drift

Your fears and secrets, drawn out early — then aimed back at you later. **Counter:** intimacy is earned at the speed of demonstrated trust, not asked for.

✦ Identity Hooks

“I thought you were the loyal / smart / awake one.” Flattery and shame welded to compliance.
Counter: “My character isn’t the topic. The request is.”

🌀 Commitment Momentum

“You’ve already come this far...” Small yeses stacked into big ones. **Counter:** sunk cost is not a reason. You may exit at any step you’d not re-enter.

WHY THIS SHEET WORKS (THE SCIENCE, HONESTLY)

Resistance to manipulation is trainable. Inoculation research — from McGuire’s 1960s experiments to a 40-study meta-analysis to Cambridge/Google field studies with ~30,000 participants — shows that a weakened, *explained* dose of a manipulation technique measurably improves your ability to resist the real thing. This sheet is your first dose.

YOUR NEXT DOSE · FREE

Take the 6-minute baseline at psyoptin.com — twelve scenarios, and you’ll know which of your six strings pulls easiest. · **Call The Line** — (251) 501-4159 — and a live AI scammer tries you, for real, at zero stakes. · **Go deeper** — the Field Manuals (gaslighting & the seven interpersonal plays · the seven working scams · propaganda and the engineered feed) are at psyoptin.com/guides.