

10 Signs Your Man Is 'Gaslighting' You to Make You Seem Crazy

by Kiri Blakeley

Have you ever felt like you were going crazy? And not because anyone has told you. But because someone -- maybe it's your husband -- keeps telling you you're crazy. "Are you crazy?" you hear over and over. "You are really paranoid. You need to get your head checked!" Hear that enough times and you probably believe it. But are you really crazy or are you being gaslighted?

"Gaslighted" is a psychiatric term that came from a classic movie starring Ingrid Bergman called *Gaslight* (which was a British play before that). In it, her husband tries to drive her mad. (Netflix it.) But it turns out she's not crazy after all -- her husband is just trying to make her think she is. Gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse wherein your partner manipulates your perception of reality. Here's 10 signs you're being gaslighted

1. You're told something is normal that you can feel deep in your bones is not. Say your husband (or partner or boyfriend or even friend) does something you find strange. Like ask you to lie for him. You don't think this is right. You say so. He comes back with something like, "Every wife would do this. We're a team. I'm in trouble and I need you. I can't believe you don't think that this is normal. There is something wrong with you!"
2. You're told you are paranoid, too sensitive, or stressed out. Again, something strange happens. Your husband is seen out with a woman you don't know. You ask him about it. He has some vague explanation but then tops it off with, "Really, honey, you are totally paranoid to think I'd be cheating on you. Are you hormonal? Maybe you need to see a therapist."
3. You start to exhibit "crazy" behavior. You find yourself doing things that you couldn't imagine doing before you were with your man. Like questioning every time he goes out; accusing him of things that may or may not be true; going through the garbage to find "evidence" that he's lying to you again. You may find yourself desperately scouring the aisles of a grocery store, determined to get the right kind of pasta sauce so you don't "disappoint" him again, and end up having a meltdown when you find they're out of Classico.
4. You mistrust your perceptions. You're constantly being told that what you're seeing, hearing, feeling isn't what you're seeing, hearing, feeling. You tell a joke at a party and everyone laughs, but your husband later tells you you weren't funny. You look in the mirror and see someone who is thin, but he tells you you've gained weight. You've always thought you were smart, but somehow with your husband, you always feel dumb.
5. You begin to accept his perceptions, even though they don't seem true. You were at a restaurant with your husband and struck up a quick conversation with the waiter. Your husband tells you were being flirtacious. "Was I being flirtacious?" you ask yourself, even though that wasn't your intention at all. "I must have been and don't realize it." You ask what you think is a reasonable question only to be told you are harping. "Am I harping?" you think. "Maybe I am a nag."
6. You start to feel like your memory is terrible. Your husband is always saying something to the effect of, "I never said that, did that, promised that," to things you're pretty certain he said, did, or promised. He might tell you that he "never" gets on Facebook, but when you see him on Facebook and mention it, he says, "I didn't say I never went on Facebook. I just hardly go on it." Then you see him on it the next day. And the next.
7. You start to feel like your spouse has a terrible memory. You can have a deep conversation one night about something important to you, only to have your spouse say later, "We never talked about that," "I definitely never said that," or "Did you dream this?" You might get tempted to record conversations just so you can keep them straight.
8. You start lying. In order to avoid all of the mental abuse you'll know you'll get if you say a, b, or c, you start to lie. You were never a liar in the past. You don't lie to other people.

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9. You begin to think you're crazy. You have thoughts like, "Maybe he's right and I'm just totally overreacting. I am always overreacting," or "There must be something wrong with me that I'm always on him about stupid things."

10. Depression. The end stage of being gaslighted is that you feel depressed, anxious, unsure, and hopeless. Does he care or not care? Are you oversensitive or do you have a right to complain? You end up getting so confused and disoriented that you check out into depression.

Every couple has miscommunications, and everyone hears or sees things sometimes that they misconstrue, but if you are frequently experiencing the above symptoms, you are likely being gaslighted.

Do you ever feel like this?

If you think you are being gaslighted, you can get help at the National Domestic Violence Help Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.