

**Angie Rosillo, LMHC, CHT
W.I.I.T. I.O.P. Therapist**

FRACTURED FAIRY TALE

From the moment you met him there's something familiar about him that makes you feel comfortable. Even though you've just met, it seems like you've known him a long time. Maybe, just maybe, he's the one. He's funny and jokes around. He takes you out, just the two of you, and you find that flattering and very romantic. He has a steady job and even fixes things around your house. He never shows up empty-handed, so you know he's not a mooch, and he must really care because he helps you make decisions about work, family and friends. He's interested in you. In fact, he wants to know everything you do and everywhere you go. He's so different from the last guy who wouldn't have noticed if you'd dyed your hair green right in front of him. He has a little trouble with anger and expressing his feelings, but he's been hurt too, and after all, look at all of the things that he does for you that show you he loves you. He'll open up with you in time. You'll be able to show him that you're not like the others. And once you've proven to him how much you love him, everything will be perfect.

And so you take the leap. You fall head over heels in love with him and dedicate your life to making him happy. He's all you'll ever need and you'll never be alone again. You'll love him so many ways that he'll have to like one of them and eventually he'll trust you and realize how lucky he is to have you. He'll stop being so touchy and grumpy. After all, he works really hard and he can't help being tired and out of sorts when he comes home. You'd want to toss back a few beers and sit down to a good meal too if you worked as hard as he does and for a boss who doesn't appreciate you. So what if he didn't get you a card or even mention your birthday? He washed your car and changed the oil in it didn't he? And he didn't mean to hurt your feeling when you went out the other night. He'd just had a really bad day and drank a little too much. It was your fault anyway. You shouldn't have been talking to your girlfriend at that club when he wanted you to pay attention to him. That's why he made that joke about you to his friends about your being a dog. Anyway, it was only a joke and maybe you didn't look your best that night.

And he promised on his life that he'd never hit you again. You can understand why he gets so crazy jealous. Look at what his last girlfriend did to him. You'll just try harder, that's all. And if he didn't care he wouldn't demand to know every single thing you do every minute of the day. Right? So what if he made you quit your job? He makes enough money that you don't really need to work and beside, that gives you more time to get the house just the way he likes it before he gets home. You'll miss your friends at work, but you can sneak in and e-mail them on his computer before he gets home. And he did help you clean up the mess after he threw his dinner across the room. It'll get better. You'll just have to remember that he

doesn't like canned peas, that's all. From now on you'll just have to ask him what he wants to eat everyday.

STOP!!!! Listen to yourself!! Look at what you're doing! You might as well still be at home running around in the no-win circles you spent your childhood in. You are following your abuser's programming perfectly. You've chosen a partner the way most abuse survivors do; by picking someone who possesses the very worst qualities of your father and your mother, sprinkled with just enough positive traits to keep you hanging in there. You've created the classic co-dependent pattern of "him first and I don't count" so you can get more of what you got at home. Did you like it then? Do you like it now? No? **THEN CHANGE IT.** Take out your list of abuser values and abuser loyalties. Does anything sound familiar here? Of course it does.

In addition to "Mr. Right" turning out to be a carbon copy of your abusers, everything about this relationship is distracting you from your life and your recovery. And you will never break that pattern until you stop looking to another person to fulfill your every need. "But Angie...you don't understaaanndd." Oh yes I do. And what I understand is that you now have the tools to change things. WIIT has taught you how to break the pattern of abuser values and loyalties. It may not be comfortable at first, but it does get easier with practice and you know it does. Stop rationalizing all of your partner's crappy behavior as acceptable when you know it's not. And if there is anything about this scenario that reminds you of your current relationship, then I can guarantee that you're not doing your affirmations or using the other healthy skills you learned at WIIT. How do I know this? Because if you were seriously working on your recovery on a daily basis, you wouldn't be able to stand the treatment you're receiving. Sssoooo. You have a lot of work to do, don't you? But I'm going to help you. Here's a formula that will help you to focus on and identify a bad relationship:

IF

The worst characteristics of dad + the worst characteristics of mom (sprinkled with some positives) + negative events + negative abuser messages= **YOUR PRESENT RELATIONSHIP...**

...THEN YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.

You are beautiful, intelligent, loving women who deserve to be treasured, cherished and adored. Anything else is unacceptable. You know what to do, so just do it. Every handsome prince does not have to turn into an ugly frog. You can live happily ever after. And you deserve it! We all believe in you. Go for it! **YOU CAN DO IT!!!**