

Is This Happening to You?

A self-assessment – twelve questions,
no labels, no jargon

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This is not a diagnosis. It is a mirror.

The following questions describe experiences that people in relationships with the extraction pattern commonly report. They apply to any relationship – romantic partners, parents, siblings, business partners, colleagues, friends. Read each one slowly. If it resonates, that is data.

1. After conversations with this person, do you frequently feel confused, exhausted or unable to remember what you were originally trying to say?
2. Do you find yourself constantly questioning your own memory, perception or judgement – wondering if you are the unreasonable one?
3. Does this person present one face in public (charming, generous, warm) and a fundamentally different one in private?
4. Have your friendships narrowed since this person entered your life? Are you more isolated than you were before?
5. Do you feel a low-level dread before seeing this person that you cannot fully explain?
6. When things improve between you, does the improvement come at exactly the moment you were about to leave, set a boundary or raise a concern – only to fade once you stay?
7. Does this person's suffering always seem to be the most urgent thing in the room – making your needs permanently secondary?
8. Have you been told you are “too sensitive,” “too difficult,” “paranoid” or “crazy” – by the person whose behaviour provoked the reaction?
9. When you raise a concern, does the conversation consistently end with you apologising?
10. Do you feel guilty most of the time without being able to identify a specific reason?
11. Does your body react to this person before your mind catches up – tightening stomach, racing heart, sudden exhaustion, urge to flee?
12. Has every previous partner, colleague or friend of this person apparently been terrible, unfair or betraying – and are you beginning to wonder if you will be next?

What the answers mean

If you recognised yourself in three or four of these, something is worth paying attention to. If you recognised yourself in six or more, you are likely experiencing a pattern – not a series of misunderstandings.

These questions do not diagnose the other person. They describe your experience. And your experience is valid whether or not the other person fits any clinical category.

If what you just read matches your life, you are not imagining it. You are not too sensitive. You are recognising something that evolved specifically to be invisible to your good faith.

What is the good faith problem?

Human cooperation runs on trust. Your brain extends trust and suppresses doubt as a design feature, not a personal failing. The extraction pattern exploits this. Roughly one in twenty people carry this pattern. They are not monsters. They are not rare. And the pattern evolved specifically to be invisible to decent people. That is why you didn't see it. That is why you are not to blame.

Recognition is the beginning of protection. The pattern's primary weapon is invisibility. You have just made it visible.

What to do next

If you are in immediate danger: call 999 or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (24 hours, free).

Free guides at www.trueregard.com: The Good Faith Problem · Recognising Covert Narcissism · Waking Up · What Is Happening to You · Family Court Survival Guide · Personal Protection Toolkit · Professional Toolkits.

The full framework: *The Extraction Pattern* and *The Capture: How They Stole America* by Vaughan Smith. www.trueregard.com/the-books.

Share this. The pattern survives through isolation. Every copy shared rebuilds the grandmother.

THE EXTRACTION PATTERN

Vaughan Smith

The five per cent who design extraction. The ninety-five per cent who live inside it. The architecture that could contain it.

THE CAPTURE

Vaughan Smith

How They Stole America. The extraction pattern captured democracy, economy, healthcare, media and accountability – domain by domain.

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