

Nice guys (and gals)

What's wrong with being nice? Nothing... so long as you don't lose sight of your own needs. It isn't "selfish" or "needy" to give your own needs reasonably equal weight to your partner's. That means telling your partner what you want and need.

In fact a person who will never say what they really want, or really think, can be incredibly annoying and frustrating to their partner. Perhaps they expect their partner to "just know". Sometimes a person like this will silently "put up with" something they are not enjoying, rather than say anything. Or expect gratitude for things they have done that were never asked for in the first place. Their boundaries are very confused.

The problem with people pleasers is that you can't really trust them, because you never know when they really agree with you, and when they're just "being nice". And how long it will last. It's a bit like dealing with a sales person – they may be very nice, but you can't be sure how much of it is real. You always feel as if you're being "managed". I have nothing against sales people, and being "nice" is fine in social settings, but in your closest relationships, it doesn't allow real intimacy.

If this is you, some counselling might help you to work out what your life is about, what your needs are, and how to get them met. If this is your partner, some counselling might improve your relationship.

For men like this I recommend the book *"No More Mr Nice Guy"* by Robert Glover. I don't necessarily agree with everything he says, but it has a useful set of exercises. Some men find, when they read this book, that it describes their problem perfectly.