

# 11 Traits of Unsafe People

The 11 traits listed below are descriptions of the personal traits of unsafe people compared with safe people. For each negative trait, there is a corresponding positive one. Remember that no one is perfect, and even "safe" people can lie or be "unsafe" at times. However, if they are truly willing to change, offer them the chance to work it out and re-establish trust. For more information, and to learn about nine "interpersonal" traits of unsafe people, be sure to read *Safe People* by Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend. The following chart has been adapted from chapter two of their book.

Unsafe People		Safe People	
Trait	Description	Trait	Description
<i>Think they have it all together, and seldom, if ever, admit their weaknesses.</i>	There is no balance in the relationship because the unsafe person has to maintain the superior role and does not allow his partner to be strong. The weaker one often thinks she needs the stronger one to survive.	<i>Admits their weaknesses</i>	The safe person grows spiritually and emotionally by "confessing our faults and weaknesses to each other." (James 5:16) They encourage growth in their partner as well.
<i>Are religious</i>	They pride themselves on being dedicated to God and having a lot of knowledge about the Bible, but they are out of touch with their own sinfulness, pain, and need for other people.	<i>Are spiritual</i>	They are real people who really know and reflect God and His ways. Because they are honest about their own sin and shortcomings, they are able to love others who have struggles and imperfections.
<i>Are defensive</i>	When confronted, they become defensive and start making excuses for their behavior. Often, they begin attacking the person who confronts them. (Prov. 9:7-8)	<i>Are open to feedback</i>	They are more interested in doing what is right than appearing right in their own eyes. They are willing to listen because they truly want to change. (Prov. 9:8-9)
<i>Are self-righteous</i>	They see themselves as good and others as bad. They cannot see their own flaws, and often project them onto others.	<i>Are humble</i>	They realize that only by God's grace can they be accepted and loved. They give God the credit for their good deeds.
<i>Only apologize</i>	They may cry, "act" sorry, and promise never to do it again, but they never make any real changes in their behavior. Their motivation may have to do with getting caught or getting someone off their back. They have no internal desire to change.	<i>Apologize and change their behavior</i>	When they recognize a wrong, they really want to change because they don't want to hurt anyone like that again. Even though they are not perfect and may sin again, they are consistently pursuing godliness and "right" living.
<i>Avoid working on their problems</i>	They do not admit they have problems, and do not forgive people who have hurt them. They often act out of their own past hurts which in turn hurts others.	<i>Deal with their problems</i>	They take responsibility for their own actions, and are willing to share their problems with others in order to grow. They own their problems with honesty, and seek God's help to work through them.
<i>Demand trust</i>	They feel entitled to trust even though they are not trustworthy.	<i>Earn trust</i>	They understand that trust must be earned, and they work hard to prove their trustworthiness.
<i>Believe they are perfect</i>	The image of perfection becomes more important than their relationships. They must keep up the image at all costs, including placing the blame on someone else so they can remain blameless. Because they do not feel loved at a deep level, they do not have a lot of love to give.	<i>Admit their faults</i>	They readily admit their faults and offer grace to others who disappoint and fail them. (Luke 7:47)
<i>Blame others</i>	Instead of dealing with their sin, they blame other people, their past, parents, God, or anything else they can find.	<i>Take responsibility</i>	They face their problems and are willing to make the tough changes necessary to work through them.
<i>Lie</i>	They see lying as a strategy to manage and control other people.	<i>Tell the truth</i>	Telling the truth is a pattern of life. When they do lie, they see it as a problem that needs to be changed. "Lying gives way to truth, confrontation, humility, and repentance." (page 38 <i>Safe People</i> )
<i>Are stagnant</i>	They do not see the need to change and grow unless they are forced into great pain or loss. (Prov. 17:10)	<i>Are growing</i>	They want to change and mature to become more like Christ, and they actively seek help and instruction to do so.