Red Flags: Abusive language to listen for

Early in a relationship, a domestic violence abuser might shower you with gifts and compliments. Often, abusive language and behaviours are gradually introduced, as the abuser begins efforts to control and manipulate you.

Here are some examples of what they might say and do:

- Call you names and criticise your appearance
- Accuse you of cheating
- Constantly put you down
- Always transfer the blame onto you or someone else – it’s never their fault
- Constantly question where you have been/who you have been with
- Stop you from talking about things that interest you by changing the subject/acting uninterested
- Say hurtful things to you, then pretend it was a joke and that you are too sensitive
- Make you apologise for things you didn’t do
- Speak for you or act as if your feelings don’t matter
- Talk about previous partners in a very negative manner
- Not talk to you for periods of time for no apparent reason
- Tell you that nobody likes you
Those who use verbal abuse to harm their partner may use words like:

- Useless
- Fat
- Ugly
- Unloveable
- Stupid
- Idiot
- Worthless
- Crazy
- Bitch
- Mad
- Dumb
- Slut
- Lazy
- Trashy
- Whore