

Charmers and Con Artists

In her book, *Charmers & Con Artists & Their Flip Side*, author Sandra Scott identifies the following characteristics:

Charmers . . .

- are often described as “the nicest guy you could ever know,” but in relationships they are very controlling, self-serving, and irresponsible
- seldom agree to therapy. They don’t see a problem with themselves so why should they change? If they go to therapy, they try to charm the therapist.
- look good on the outside, but an ulterior motive lurks on the inside
- see themselves as victims rather than those they hurt
- believe they are special and entitled to special behavior; rules that apply to others do not apply to them
- have their own brand of logic and an excuse for everything
- appear to be very giving, but there is always a price to pay for their attention
- can apologize easily, but there is no true repentance
- don’t feel love or guilt deeply, tend to minimize the pain of those they have hurt
- discredit their accusers when they are confronted
- cope by making themselves the hero in the worst situations
- are very clever, and often able to keep from being caught
- have extreme shifts in personality, may be kind and sarcastic in the same instant
- are very needy, and blame others for not being able to meet their needs
- appear to be very sensitive to others, and use their sense of humor to make others laugh or feel good

- shift attention off themselves onto others to keep from being found out
- depend on lies and deception to maintain a good image
- need power and control to bolster their low self-esteem and very fragile ego
- have a distorted sense of shame, and feel no embarrassment in doing whatever is necessary to get their needs satisfied
- are narcissistic, and need to believe they are superior to others
- are intimidated by intelligent, perceptive women
- live in constant fear of discovery
- find and use those who will appreciate and adore them
- rationalize their behavior with no remorse for the pain they cause
- are one frustration away from violence
- will not change as long as life works for them and there are no consequences to face
- are the center of their world and need constant praise and adoration from others
- know how to win the confidence of others, and use personal information against them later to make themselves feel better or superior
- view their own thoughts and words as ultimate truth
- use kindness as a smoke screen to solicit silence or lack of confrontation of their actions
- are master manipulators who zero in on others’ point of weakness
- lay heavy guilt trips on anyone who confronts their bad behavior
- twist the truth, lie, distract, accuse and use irrational and irrelevant

arguments if confronted

- lack healthy shame
- mess with your mind to make themselves look normal—twist, distort, and tarnish your reputation
- know how to play the courtroom game and come across more credible than their victims

Con Artists . . .

- are motivated by greed for material gain
- choose those to whom they show genuine love and affection, with the capability of killing a stranger or enemy without regret
- have a selective conscience with their own code of ethics
- know right from wrong, but choose to do wrong to get what they want
- seek trusting or naïve people to con
- often back off or move on to con someone else when they don’t get what they want
- will resort to violence when they cannot escape
- make the conscious choice to do evil
- don’t mind hurting others as long as they get what they want

Sandra Scott summarizes the charmer and con artist this way:

“A healthy person seeks to *be* good.

A Charmer seeks to be *perceived* as good because he *desperately needs to believe he is good, because he fears he isn’t*.

A con artist seeks to be *perceived* as good in order to get what he wants.”

Her warning should be taken seriously:

“The con artist can rob you of your time, energy and money. The Charmer can rob you of your youth, your integrity, your self-esteem, your very soul. The con artist robs and leaves you sadder but wiser. The Charmer rapes your spirit and drags you with him into his own personal hell.”