

## **How to Avoid Seductive Withholders**

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Seductive Withholders (SW's) are people who can act very seductive (implying they are available) one moment and then very withholding the next. The shift is dramatic and comes at unexpected times. Some SW's are just plain narcissists and the seduction is just part of the chase. Others are what I call Ambivalent Love Addicts (ALA's), men and women who crave love and chase after it only to become frightened and beg off. Everyone has his or her own style of seduction, but whatever it is it is quite persuasive. The withholding can be anything from withholding affection to withholding sex. Not returning phone calls, seeing other people—in general being unavailable.

There are various explanations for why people withhold. With some it is a matter of control. This is ego-driven. They like power over people and they do this by keeping them on the edge of their seats all the time. More common is the person who withholds because they are frightened of intimacy. When they are feeling needy and safe they get seductive. When they get too close and feel claustrophobic they withhold. A good book about this is by Carter and Sokul entitled "Men Who Can't Love." (The title is misleading. SW's can love they just can't get emotionally intimate.) SW's are also people (as we discussed) who are on the rebound. They really can't make up their mind. These people are not SW's with everyone they meet—like the other type of SW mentioned above. When dating, try to look for the signs that a person vacillates too much. A little shift in availability is normal. Drastic, unexpected shifts are suspicious.

It is never a good idea to get into relationship with a seductive withholder who is not trying to change (even then it is a gamble). They are not, for the most part, relationship material. You cannot patiently wait for them to come around. However the SW who is not a narcissist can face his or her ambivalence and get into recovery. This means finding someone with is both exciting and compatible and staying the course. The SW cannot do this alone. They need therapy and support groups to get them through the anxiety they feel when they stay in a relationship past the initial honeymoon phase. My advice is to leave seductive withholders alone.