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Are you the social vampire of your friendship group? Here's how to find out

Start to worry when they bring out the garlic.

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Eeek! Image: Dracula *Source: BodyAndSoul*

Nothing worse than someone who sucks the life blood out of the night.

When we think of [vampires](#), images of fangs, dripping blood, black cloaks with upturned collars spring to mind. Or for the avid television and film consumers we think of [Buffy](#), Twilight, Dracula and American Horror Story.

What we don't usually think of though are our friends.

But maybe you should. Maybe we all should (cue creepy Dracula laugh).

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Because social vampires are not mythical undead creatures, they are very much walking and the odds are talking (a lot) amongst us. In fact, you probably have one of these energy draining creatures lurking around your office, your family, or your friendship group. Even worse, you may be one yourself.

Body + Soul has taken a brave leap into the sinister world of social vampires to find out more, so you don't have to.

Andrew May, human performance strategist and leadership coach says that very simply, a social vampire is “someone who drains the energy from other people.”



Image: iStockSource:BodyAndSoul

They are the people who will talk pretty much non-stop about themselves, they stay about two hours past their welcome, if the attention is on someone else, they pivot it back to number one. They are always in the middle of some sort of drama and they lack the self-awareness that they are doing any let alone all of these things.

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But even before a social vampire begins their attack, a lot of the time you can spot them, or feel their [energy](#) draining effects simply by listening to your instincts Andrew explains.

“It’s often a gut feeling.” Some people you love being around and they make you feel good, social vampires though will suck the energy straight from the room as soon as they walk into it.

Other than our instinct and the more self-absorbed tendencies mentioned earlier, Andrew says there are also other signs to look out for to spot a social vampire.

1. Everything is negative or problem focused.
2. They are passive aggressive
3. They can attack others – either explicitly or covertly (including complaining about others behind their back)
4. They are quick to judge you and others around them
5. They don’t have a balance between listening and talking, they just talk
6. They are very opinionated
7. They are never happy, even when they get what they want.

But perhaps the most tell-tale sign of a social vampire, like the pointed teeth of the mythical version, is that you feel completely drained and felt after you’ve been in their company.



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A social vampire will make you feel completely exhausted (physically, emotionally and socially), like you need days to recover to recoup your energy that has been sucked from your body. This can in turn, lower your confidence and make you feel lonely and low.

“Social vampires can bring on stress and anxiety within you,” this can also generate a physiological response such as tightened muscles or a racing heart, greatly impacting your health and wellbeing Andrew says.

Unlike Dracula though, our social vampire friends, family members or colleagues probably have absolutely no idea that they are doing what they're doing and to them at least, have the best intentions. But this doesn't make it okay.

“Although often well-meaning, energy vampires have a vicarious need to put other people down and to point out faults in those around them, which serves to fuel their insecurities and inflate their own mercurial tyres.”

So, what can you do if you know a social vampire, or if you have realised that you may be one yourself?

Well put the wooden stakes down, because there is hope!



Image: iStockSource:BodyAndSoul

1. Firstly, Andrew says that you can slay a social vampire by removing the really toxic ones from your life.

“As difficult and as challenging as it might seem, you can sever a relationship with a social vampire. It's OK to stop other people from draining you and your finite stores of time and energy,” he says.

But if you aren't quite ready for that, here are some other steps you can follow instead:

1. Become self-aware

Once you have identified a social vampire in your life, the next thing is to identify how they are making you feel.

2. Calm down and breathe

Regardless of what the social vampire is saying to you, make an effort to stay calm and don't let them sabotage your physiology or thoughts with their negative emotions.



Image: iStockSource:BodyAndSoul

3. Redefine your relationship

It is now time for you to take a stance and to take control of the controller. Stay neutral and clearly explain how you are no longer willing to let them put you down or to constantly make you feel like crap.

4. Stay positive

Finally, Andrew says to try to offset the negative thoughts from the vampire with your positive energy. And if all else fails grab yourself some garlic!

Shona Hendley is a freelance writer and ex-secondary school teacher. You can follow her on Instagram [here](#).

Andrew May is recognised as one of the world's leading human performance strategists and leadership coaches. A [best-selling author](#). [In-demand keynote speaker](#). [Top-rating podcaster](#). Leadership and transformation specialist. [Mental skills](#) coach for elite athletes and sporting teams. CEO and founder of [StriveStronger.com](#)

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