DAY03 · FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2026

“IT’S ONLY BECAUSE I CARE.”

03 WHEN CARE BECOMES CONTROL.

Concern can be used to justify behaviour that slowly restricts another person’s freedom. When does care become control?

UNDERSTANDING THE TOPIC

Coercivecontrol isapattern ofbehaviour that limits someone’s autonomy—their ability to make their own decisions. It can include monitoring, isolation, rules, threats and punishments.

Each act on its own can look minor, or even caring. What matters is the pattern and its effect: over time, the person may change how they live to avoid consequences.

Not every disagreement or jealous moment is abuse. In a healthy relationship, both people can disagree, say no, and keep their own friends, money and privacy without fear.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is it repeated? Demanding passwords or checking a phone again and again.
- Does it shrink their world? Deciding who they can see or monitoring where they go.
- Is there fear? Feeling they must check first, or “walk on eggshells.”
- Are there consequences? Being punished for saying no.

ONE PRACTICAL ACTION

LOOK AT THE PATTERN, NOT ONE MOMENT.

If someone shares concerns about a partner, focus on how they feel rather than debating whether one incident “counts.” You might ask, “Do you feel free to make your own choices?”

KEY TAKEAWAY — **Care respects your choices. Control restricts them.**

LEARN MORE

Assaulted Women’s Helpline — Woman abuse
awhl.org/woman-abuse

Women and Gender Equality Canada — 16 Days of Activism
canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/commemo rations-celebrations/16-days.html

NEED SUPPORT?

You don’t have to work out next steps alone.
Women’s Habitat 24-hour crisis line: 416-252-5829
Assaulted Women’s Helpline (24/7): 1-866-863-0511 · #SAFE (#7233) on a Bell, Rogers, Fido or Telus mobile
In immediate danger, call 911.