

The Seven Relationship Wreckers

The most common relationship problems and how to solve them.

by Michael Adamedes

1. Criticising/Blaming – *being right is not as good as being happy*

Feeling frustrated and critical of your partner's behaviour and perceived limitations is toxic to your relationship.

Solution: Look for the good purpose in their behaviour, they may not understand the situation, lack skills or confidence, be afraid of failure or are angry. Stop being critical and take the pressure off them and yourself. Help them in one or more of the following ways: not expecting them to always get it right, provide support, do it yourself, stop worrying about it – it's never as important as you imagine it to be.

Deeper Solution: Criticism and blame is always the projection of unresolved issue/s within yourself. For example, the need to be perfect is a compensation for feeling inadequate and if you perceive inadequacies within your partner then there is a need to fix it. The fear of failure may mean, that if your partner is "not getting it right" then they may fail and by association you fail. Look deep within yourself, why are you really upset with the situation? It's always more than just the external events.

2. Unfulfilled Nurturing – *looking for someone to save you or make you happy.*

We often expect too much from our partner - that they will always understand us, be consistent, always be there for us and support us no matter how bad we feel. Regardless of the love and goodwill most people have for each other, there is a limit to their emotional energy and understanding.

Solution: See the differences in your personalities as complementing your relationship rather than pulling it apart. Be kind, gentle and patient with your partner, as this stressful feeling will pass. Also understand how your behaviour is affecting them.

Deeper Solution: Regardless of how much your mother and father loved you it's unlikely they were able to fulfil your nurturing needs as a child. Often because they were not adequately nurtured themselves and either lacked an understanding of what was required or they overcompensated for the deficiency of their childhood. Although most parents did their best, many people still feel empty or alone and expect their relationship to fill the hole. This is the most difficult issue for everyone to deal with and it requires you to educate yourself around your deeper feelings, their causes and not to project them onto your partner and make them responsible for your intense feelings or the need to shut down and separate.

3. Lack of Communication – *the filter of your emotions will stop you from understanding the other person's perspective.*

The person you love is often the person who usually most frustrates you. It's the intimacy of a loving relationship that has you emotionally attached and often overreacting. Most communication issues are a lack of rapport issues. When there is a breakdown of connection, then regardless of how logical or rational you are, the other person will still not get it.

Solution: Don't try and work it out when upset, agree to talk to each other at a later date, when you have both calmed down. You need to reconnect to each other first before you attempt to talk. Some ways of building connection are - act normally, help out around the

home, tell them you love them, do something that supports them, etc. Be very sensitive as to how you do this, so that your partner doesn't interpret your actions as being manipulative. Get into the habit of building connection on a regular basis. More suggestions for building connection are in the Solution sections of the following four parts.

Deeper Solution: Sometimes childhood issues of not being valued, listened to or able to speak up are activated in the relationship. It is your responsibility to ask for and negotiate your needs without making your partner wrong. If that doesn't work then have a neutral third party present to help you both.

4. Work/Life Balance – *relationships require continual nurturing.*

Just because you love each other and are married does not mean it is enough to ensure a long-term relationship. Over time relationships can become stale and boring, usually because people have stopped having fun together. Relationships take time and energy.

Solution: Couple time, family time, holidays, time with friends, time to stop and watch the grass grow. Because of the pressure for your time you often have to schedule this into your life.

Deeper Solution: Losing yourself to work and family is often a survival issue – leading to the false beliefs that *I don't have enough money, time or resources*. Become aware of your anxiety around not having enough or not doing enough is a good first step in changing it.

5. Dwindling Sex Life – *Good sex needs time and energy.*

For many couples the pressure from work and children often leaves them tired and time poor. Often time for romance is not prioritised and the passion is lost.

Solution: Build the romance by scheduling regular dates, create romantic rituals – anniversaries, birthdays, special music, pet names, do things as a couple. Talk to each other about what turns you on, what you like, share your thoughts and fantasies. Just knowing that you and your partner want to rekindle the passion is sexy.

Deeper Solution: If there are fears about expressing yourself sexually or surrendering to the sexual experience, then it's necessary to educate yourself or seek professional advice. But usually sexual issues are due to lack of time/energy, unresolved anger/sadness and losing the connection with each other.

6. Not Having Clear Agreements – *clarity leads to harmony.*

Living together can be likened to a business, it's people interacting with each other towards a common purpose. In its simplest form you both live in a home and it has to function, it's cleaned, bills are paid and you plan for future activities. If you don't have a clear understanding of each other's expectations, then misunderstandings will likely occur.

Solution: Have clear agreements about every important aspect of your relationship i.e. money, domestic responsibilities, future plans, how to handle conflict, etc.

Deeper Solution: Usually when there are no clear agreements it's simply because the couple hasn't recognised the need or known how to create them.

7. Me-Time – *we all have individual needs separate from the relationship.*

It is easy to lose yourself in a relationship and the pressures of family. Women often give all of their time to the children and family commitments, while men can be consumed by work.

Solution: Schedule regular activities that are just for you - going out with friends, learning new skills, gym classes, sporting activities, etc. Also encourage your partner to take time out and spend time on their interests so you both feel fulfilled and neither resents the time you spend apart.

Deeper Solution: This is an issue of self worth and sometimes a misunderstanding of your responsibility to relationship and family. Often women reflect the example of their mothers who may have sacrificed their needs for the good of the family. Men on the other hand define themselves according to their work and ability to make money. Recognise you are unique and although the relationship is an important part of your identity, you are also more than this.