

# Is it time to say adieu?

The decision to stay in or leave a difficult marriage is by no means easy, but it is instrumental for your happiness

■ By Susanne Babbel

WHEN WE FIRST FALL in love with someone, we are in the honeymoon phase. We feel butterflies in our stomach and are excited whenever we see the other person. We want to spend a lot of time together. Life seems easier somehow, and our partner's flaws seem unimportant. Falling in love happens not only on a psychological level, but also on a biological one. When we love someone, we produce love hormones that help to lower our stress and anxiety levels and even expand our ability to trust and empathise. This is due to a

hormone called oxytocin, which is considered a 'bonding' hormone and is produced when we are being sexual. It is also found in lactating women and helps them to connect with their babies.

It's a myth that everything should stay blissful in a relationship, and it's normal to go through ups and downs. Nevertheless, sometimes we regain happiness by working on our relationship, and sometimes we need to leave it in order to be happy again. There are relationships where the partners are not com-

patible, one person's needs are not being met or one person has to compromise much more to meet the other person's needs. Although I have seen many couples work out their problems in couple's therapy, some relationships are just not a good fit, and some are too toxic due to addictions, verbal or physical abuse, an unhealthy lifestyle, a lack of understanding and blaming. Relationship issues can be solved as long as the partner recognises and admits to having a problem, is willing to work on it, and takes actions toward positive change. Otherwise, it will stay the same or possibly even get worse.

## Why do we stay?

Although, looking at a relationship from the outside, we might think it would be easy to leave if we were in a bad relationship, unfortunately this is not so. Some people are afraid to be alone, others worry about what society might think if they are single or divorced, and some are financially dependent on their partners. Another reason why it might be hard to leave is the fear that everyone will think there must be something wrong with you because your partner behaves normally in public and only acts out privately.

We also tend to see our partner's potential and yearn to help the other person become who he or she could be. Or we still have hopes of returning to happier times in the relationship. We have heard that even healthy relationships can be hard, so we don't want to give up if the relationship can still be saved; on the other hand, we don't know when to stop.

Angela [name changed] was in a verbally abusive relationship in which she was constantly yelled at. Her husband persistently belittled her and didn't listen to her. When I asked her why she didn't leave, she explained, "I'm like a frog in warm water. A frog jumps out as soon as it learns it has jumped into hot water, but if the water gets gradually hotter, it gets used to it and won't jump out—and it dies."

Sometimes we don't realise how bad our relationship is until we read about a similar relationship, or we are already out of the situation, or someone tells us from an outsider's

perspective what's really going on. That was the case for Angela. Once she read Patricia Evans's book titled *The Verbally Abusive Relationship* and talked to her on the phone, she understood the dynamic of her marriage and came to therapy to find the strength and self-esteem to leave. Usually, as a bad relationship goes on, our self-esteem declines to the point where we might need to seek some help to rebuild it.

## Why we need to leave

An environment that is too stressful and not nurturing or loving enough can cause depression and anxiety, as well as illness and chronic pain. In his book *The Honeymoon Effect*, Bruce Lipton mentions that cells are shaped by their environment. He points out scientific experiments have shown that cells grow when love hormones such as oxytocin and dopamine enter the bloodstream. But when we produce stress hormones, the cells stop growing. Therefore, we need to make sure that we create the best environment possible for our self-care.

## How to regain happiness

Happiness is about choosing to take a different direction when you find that you are on the wrong path. After Angela left her husband, she expressed, "Eventually I broke out of it, because it wasn't a place where I could spend my life and I couldn't fix it. Nor could I get him to fix it." She continued, "I'm happier right now than I ever was." Seeking out the right support system from friends, family, or a therapist helps you with your journey.

Our subconscious beliefs create a large part of how we live our lives, so when you change your subconscious beliefs, you change your life too. Many methods are available to help you to change your subconscious beliefs, including Emotional Freedom Technique [EFT], PSYCH-K [Psychological Kinesiology] and Instant Emotional Healing. You have the power to be happy again, even if you can't see that right now. When you shift your thinking and believe that you can be happy, when you focus on loving relationships and what you want, you'll begin to attract what you want.



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