

Life is too precious to waste in resentment

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QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF DURING CONFLICT



Sometimes it is difficult to see the purpose behind conflict. Here are four reorienting questions to ask yourself next time you wonder why you're fighting:



*How much variety have we had in
our relationship lately?*

We recently ran The Relationship Workshop, and a few weeks ago it was the emotional wounds/recurring argument session. And, lo and behold, Tim and I DID NOT have our recurring argument!! Normally it shows up in a very strong way, but not this time. We didn't even notice until afterwards, and I asked myself why this might be.

On reflection, the weeks leading up to that had been really emotionally tumultuous for me. While we hadn't been fighting, there had been a lot of ups and downs for me personally. It seems to me, looking back, that I didn't need the emotional variety of our recurring argument after that.



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I tend to have a higher need for variety (particularly of the emotional kind) than Tim does. So I am often the instigator and perpetuator of arguments for us. It meets needs for me, inside the relationship. I get a high amount of significance, variety, certainty and connection through arguing.

When I come up against unwanted conflict in the future, it would be well worth me asking myself "Have I been getting enough positive emotional variety lately?" or "What could we do together to have some fun?"

Book a holiday, have a date night, exercise, order takeaway, whatever you can do together to boost the variety in your relationship in a positive way will help to reduce the conflict occurring in the relationship.

2 How long has it been since we made love?

When we were first trying to increase the frequency of sex in our relationship I really started to notice the correlation between the number and severity of the arguments we had and how long it had been since we had made love.

Sex is a fantastic way to meet all of the emotional needs positively inside the relationship. It also reduces stress hormones, releases endorphins (promoting positive mood), melatonin (promoting sleep) and oxytocin (creating an emotional bond between you).

In order to increase our sexual variety, certainty, connection and significance, we scheduled sex at least once a week to make sure it wouldn't be too long between sessions. (It might seem counter-intuitive to schedule sex for variety, but doing it provides more variety than not doing it).

Practice increasing the frequency of sex in your relationship to reduce unwanted conflict.



3 Is there a male/female misunderstanding?

We so often underestimate the brain differences between men and women. We tend to prefer to believe that the other person is wrong, rude, or deliberately mean, rather than be open to the idea that they actually experience life differently than we do.

Recall some of the key masculine/feminine differences: Men want straight communication, to be appreciated and to make love to feel emotionally connected.

Women want to feel understood, to be sought after, and to feel emotionally connected before they make love.

The cry of our hearts is different. Often, a man's directness is abrasive to a woman. Often, a woman's subtlety is completely missed by a man.

Rather than making them wrong about this, allow for the possibility that life occurs differently to them. Its purpose is different and it feels different.

Together, you represent two different manifestations of the power and character of God. The person who tries to change, eliminate or underestimate one half of God will surely fail.

4 How is my wound being triggered?

Ever wonder why adults in an argument behave like children? It's because we are so driven to avoid pain from our childhood wounds which are being triggered by our partner.

Ask yourself what you are feeling at this moment (look deeper than surface emotions like anger or hurt, there is a particular feeling underneath that is driving your behaviour.)

Understand that this feeling is really a feeling triggered from childhood. It is a feeling that lives inside of you, not one that is being imposed by your partner.



Rather than running from this feeling, or blaming your partner for it, choose simply to experience it. You've been repressing and avoiding it for a long time and so far, it hasn't gone away.

Let's try something different. Feel it as strongly as you can, continually making more room for it inside yourself. Rather than practising childlike hurt, practise childlike curiosity about it. Emotions that we accept pass much more quickly than those we reject.



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