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BY RODNEY NELSON

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## 7 Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship

by Dawn Wiggins, Ed.S.

You're not happy, and you want to know if what you are experiencing are legit signs of an unhealthy relationship. And it feels scary even to be researching this topic. Because typing the words into google and reading the results make it real. Too real.

Well, let's talk about it and get to the bottom of it. Whatever the case, there is a solution for you. Keep tabs on how many signs apply to your relationship.

Sign #1: Your relationship doesn't feel like a team - ever. You want to have a relationship that consists of give and take, but you can't find a middle ground. You both complain that the other isn't doing enough. And you can't wrap your

head around how that is possible. After all, you must your ass to ignore the bad, focus on the good and keep this thing afloat. But it's sinking fast. And no matter what you try, you two can't get on the same page. Your motto could be "All for one and none for all."

Sign #2: You are mean to each other - even if you don't say it out loud, you think it. You are critical, judgy, and blaming of one another. The tone of voice is edgy, hostile or flat. And on occasion, it ends up in name calling.

Sign #3: You are listening to defend yourself rather than listening to understand them. This one turns into a nasty habit that is difficult to break. And the thought

of allowing them to get away with how they view you is intolerable. So you argue to no end.

Sign #4: Date nite is a thing of the past, and you're not creating quality time with each other. Life is hard work and priorities are constantly shifting based on real-time needs. But you've stopped prioritizing time with just the two of you to reconnect. Remember that scene from Armageddon where Bruce Willis insists on letting the guys go out on the town the night before the mission? He asked NASA officials, "What if they get up there and forget what they're fighting for?!"

Sign #5: There is no sexual intimacy, and you are never in the mood.

Sign #6: You have low trust. A difficulty trusting isn't necessarily a reflection of your relationship however not being able to trust will damage a relationship anyway. Whether your struggle to trust was baggage you brought in or picked up along the way, it's blocking your ability to get close.

Sign #7: There are secrets which may include cagy behavior about phone use. Finally, I want you to think about your level of willingness to solve these problems. Be honest with yourself here. Is your willingness low or high?

If you said high, I want you to consider if you are willing to funnel a considerable portion of your time and financial resources towards the solution. Also, are you willing to let your guard down and risk getting hurt... again? And finally, are you willing to examine and adjust



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your beliefs and behavior to make it work? If you can't in good conscience say yes to these, your motivation is less than high. You also need to factor your partner's willingness. And they need to be able to answer the same questions. There is a big difference between what we say and what we mean.

So now what? One of the most important things you can do is figure out if your relationship can be repaired. If you checked 2-3 signs or less, there is a lot of reason to hope. Especially if you and your partner's willingness is high. If you have 4 or more of these signs activated in your relationship, there is a considerable cause for concern and little reason to hope. If this is you, it may be time to consider divorce.

If by chance you have over half the list checked, but both of you honestly have a high willingness to make changes (not just in word but in deed) then take action quickly and don't look back. In this situation, I highly recommend attending a couples retreat followed up with regular therapy sessions.

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