

I'm Doug Weiss

And I'm Alvean Lyons

And this is Love Life.

Alvean

Okay, Douglas. So this one is called fight or flight. So our audience members say that they get that in every relationship, there's going to be challenges. There will be conflict and differences of perspective and worldview, but what happens when relationships get to a point where you have to figure out whether to stay or to go, how do you know when it's worth fighting for the relationship or when it's time for you to leave a relationship thus fight or flight. So you have been through a few fights or fights. You've had some real valuable life experiences. When did you know? Or how does one know when it's time to quit?

Doug

Wow, I'm not sure that my own experiences translate well here. But I'm going to take a shot at this and see what your reaction is. And I want to say that I think that you, in an episode last year kind of nailed this one for me. You were talking about, and I can't remember the gentleman's name, but the comment had to do with the tell tales of a relationship that's falling apart. And if I remember, and I'm not going to get this exactly right. It had to do with the fact that when there's no fight when you don't care enough to even fight anymore, that's when the relationship is truly over. So certainly, I think that's one indication that if you are in constant conflict with another person, and you can't seem to remediate that conflict, but you're still engaged enough to go through it, because you're fighting for something, there's some hope,

But if you can never remediate and I don't know what that time frame is, but if it doesn't get better, if the intervals in-between, don't get longer, or if you don't seem to be able to move off certain topics either you need to change--hopefully you're getting some outside help-- you need to change the person that you're working with because they're obviously not successful in working with you. They're not calling you on it or they're not getting to the bottom of what the issues are or are you need to accept that this is not reconcilable. I'm going to stay invested to the end if I possibly can, It's hard for me to call it quits.

On the occasions when I have called it quits it was out of the belief that the person I was involved with no longer cared enough and that's what brought me to the to the place of saying if they are not invested how can I be invested? I can't make someone care for me, either they do or they don't. I'm not going to turn myself inside out to be someone other than who I am in order to encourage that affection. Love me for who I am. That doesn't mean I'm perfect by a long shot. I've got more flaws and foibles than you can shake a stick at but you knew that going

in so work with me. I can change, I can change my behavior, I can change the things that don't matter, but if the essential person who I am is someone that you don't believe in there's nothing there for me to to change, to work towards. There's no possible outcome that's going to be positive. That's the time I think you have to throw in the towel so maybe you know that's that's not the fright, but maybe that's the flight

Alvean

Gottman is the reference you're making. Dr. Gottman talks about the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in a relationship. And he's done 20 plus years worth of work just on that alone, 40 years total on last checked. But he focuses on whether or not relationships can be maintained in those four horsemen. He paid very close attention to our criticism, content, defensiveness and then ending with that stonewalling. And that stonewalling is where that numbness sets in, you just don't even care anymore. And when you see that he says that the relationship is dead at that point. But I would have to say that it is true that every relationship does have conflict. And everyone in some form or fashion has their method of fighting and fighting doesn't look the same inside of every relationship. But when you get to the point where you are no longer attacking the issue, but you spend more time attacking the person, you are starting to drift into places that can be profoundly dangerous inside of a relationship. Because now I'm no longer talking about you forgot to take out the trash, or that you didn't put gas in the car. Instead, I am now saying that you don't ever think about me, you never care about what my day is like. And so that's why it's easy for you to not bother to put gas in the car, or to take out the trash, because you and now you're presuming and projecting onto someone else the intentions of their heart that is, we're way past the just the argument over the thing, I'm not attacking the thing anymore, I'm now attacking you. And that pattern inside of a relationship makes it very difficult, without real intervention in real commitment on both ends, to change the way in which we are doing the hard stuff, you start destroying an individual and there's no way to repair that inside of a relationship long term, it really becomes emotionally abusive. And I would never encourage anyone to stay inside of a relationship where they are slowly dying one argument at a time, because we are not addressing things we're talking about each other,

Doug

you know, you used so perfectly the two words or the two types of expressions that to me signal that really destructive kind of fighting. The first is the you When we don't talk about how we feel, we project onto another person, what they feel, and what their intention is. The other the use of the absolute, never or always. There's nothing in life that's all, there's nothing in life that's never, and the use of those characterizations is signaling I'm at my end, I'm over it, I can't handle any more. I'm up to my limit emotionally, and I'm unwilling to do more. If we were all smart, when we hear those things, we would first of all, stop what we're doing, back away and take take things down, down down. psychiatrists, friend of mine talks about those exchanges as being sort of nuclear exchanges where you've pushed the button and you can't take it back. And unfortunately, when you If you don't do that, it's setting yourself up for the next one. Because we remember we're conditioned to the memory of those exchanges. And so someone has said to us, you're always this way, you're never that way. They've made it personal. And that is in our ears, it keeps coming up and it keeps reflecting back. And sometimes you're no

longer even fighting about what's in the moment. You're fighting about the memory of that exchange, and it's lingering in the relationship. It becomes the third party in the relationship, the elephant in the room that's always there hanging around, reminding you both. And even if you regret having said the things that you did, which you may very well, you can't easily undo it, Pandora's out of the box

Alvean

and stuffing her back in doesn't work.

Doug

Well, I think it's possible. But it's rare to get back to a place where you were before.

Alvean

No, I totally agree with you. I mean, just for a moment of spirituality. There is a scripture in the Bible that says that we're not to be unequally yoked and every time I read that, I would always think to myself as a personal revelation that the goal when we were put together in companionship and partnership is that our union was designed to be restorative, such that when I step outside of the house, I have on the inside of deposits of us being together, which make it possible for me to kind of do battle with the world so to speak, you know, the things that you cannot control the people who don't love you, the motivations people have that may be ill or nefarious in their intent, I can handle all of that because when I come home, I am able to be restored by the love that it between my partner. Our yoking makes me stronger, makes you stronger. We add to one another such that our accounts are constantly to the best of our ability being deposited in at home so that I can handle the withdrawals outside. But when you are with someone that you are making constant withdrawals that are being made at home, and then you have to go outside and there are withdrawals outside. Eventually, the account of who you are becomes overdrawn all together. So it may be that where you once were is lost, and all the fight, all of the takeaways and not enough of the gifts. So I think that for me personally, and I'm not one to quickly throw in the towel on anything, I have been married long enough to say that you can come back for some places that you thought you could never come back from. And you can end up with a better marriage after those experiences than you would have ever had, having never had some of those experiences. So I do fundamentally believe in all of that. But I will say to you that you have to pay attention to what you have left, is there still something left in you to be able to handle what is yet to come. But when you hit a point where you're at a 00, you really have to ask yourself is it worth complete destruction and order to try to hold on to something that may or may not ever work out and by all means, I think if if you reach that point where it is time to in the fight, there's nothing that you can sell.

Doug

My last bit of advice here would be take time. Don't go looking for the next relationships. Be alone. Absolutely. And take as much time, years if it's appropriate to figure out what you want for yourself in your life. Figure out what happened in that relationship. Be honest, if necessary, take yourself to task about what you brought, what you contributed to that unhappiness. I am

not suggesting here You shouldn't date or be around other people but don't go rushing off into another relationship hot on the heels of that kind of parting.

Alvean

It's different for every person. For some people, it may be months for others it may be years but no, I totally agree. Because what ends up happening when we don't is we actually that writing checks that someone else has to cash and it is not fair for the new person to have the cash the check of the unresolved relationship so give yourself a chance to come back to level place so that you can build something real and healthy from anything done prematurely we will eventually pay for later on

Doug

That is another episode of love life and we did that without a single fight or flight. We hope you're not going through that in your own life but if you are We hope this will be of some help to you. Don't be afraid to reach out for assistance

If you would like to write to us you can reach us at [doug@lovelife.digital](mailto:doug@lovelife.digital) or [alvean@lovelife.digital](mailto:alvean@lovelife.digital)

We want to thank our producer, Kamaria, and Todd our recording engineer for our another great show. We will be back next week folks. See you then.