Dr. Jackie BLACK

The 6 Most Common Red Flags

Falling in love is easy. Staying in love and sustaining closeness, romance and intimacy can be more challenging than you ever imagined.

Every relationship is unique, and there are common warning signs and red flags that indicate problems that need your immediate attention.

The 6 Most Common Red Flags

Red Flag #1:

Building a marriage that is based on the Win Win Win Principle (I Win. You Win. We Win.) doesn't just happen by itself. No one ever taught you the couple-specific tools and strategies that you must have when partnership calls you to risk, to be open-hearted and vulnerable, and to make the feelings of another as important as your own.

None of that comes naturally or is supported by love.

Red Flag #2:

You and your partner are focusing on schedules and the tedious requirements of daily life; and not on connecting with each other at the body–mind–spirit level.

Red Flag #3:

You and your partner are operating in a never-ending, vicious cycle. At this point, you're pretty apprehensive about exploring what isn't working for you and hearing what isn't working for your partner.

Red Flag #4:

You are sick and tired of the way you and your partner interact and overreact. You have stopped responding to each other and engaging with curiosity and appreciation.

Red Flag #5:

Your way of engaging each other has devolved into the #1 defense process: Blaming each other.

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Red Flag #6:

How did the person you love most in the world suddenly become the big, bad wolf? The more you want to get close, the more you seem to fight and push each other away.

Being in Trouble is Real

For many couples, the years since the beginning of your love have not been kind. There have been many assaults on your hopes and dreams of "…happily ever after."

Through the course of daily life together, it is completely legitimate to feel disappointed, disillusioned, frustrated, hurt, and mad - for a moment.

Then, it is vital that you return to acting proactively on your own behalf; and being close and connected to your partner, no matter what just happened.

Your ability to do this is known as *resilience*. Resilience is like the mortar between the bricks of your love and caring.

However, over time, your ability to be resilient can become impaired, and you can't return to acting proactively on your own behalf or feel close and connected to your partner the way you once could.

All too often, when one or both partners notice a change in their closeness and connection, neither is comfortable or brave enough to bring it to the attention of the other.

There are Two Things to Know

#1. When you can't tap into your resilience, you start behaving in really unproductive ways:

- You have the same argument over and over and over again.
- There is a stubborn issue that keeps coming up and seems to make itself the centerpiece of every conversation.
- You know how a conversation will go (or not) before you even have it, so you shut down instead of engaging with curiosity, compassion and with your whole heart.
- Your partner starts to speak, and you tune out or turn off.
- You've lost track of how long it has been since you were close and cuddly together; or worse, you bristle when they approach.

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- One or both of you start fights that seem to be about nothing important.
- You hear yourself complaining to friends about them.
- You tease them or *kid on the square*, and when their feelings get hurt, you claim they just don't have a sense of humor or they are just too sensitive.
- You *bicker or argue or push back* on absolutely everything; or maybe you're cordial and respectful with each other, but the slight chill in the room or the lack of warmth between you is unmistakable?

When you can't tap into your resilience, damaging patterns of behavior creep silently into your relationship dynamic, out of your conscious awareness, and BAM! You are a couple in trouble.

#2. When you can't tap into your resilience, you slip into a never-ending cycle of reactivity.

You are no longer able to be proactive on your own behalf. You have become hyper reactive, and your learned defense and coping patterns are automatically kicking in.

The learned defense or coping pattern of one partner almost always triggers the survival pattern of the other partner, and now you are operating in a *cycle of reactivity*.

Your patterns are *reacting to each other* rather than you, as individuals, interacting with each other.

Be assured this cycle is common and predictable AND can be interrupted and positively affected.

Beware of the Red Flags

Not unlike the warning lights on the dashboard of your car, the little (or big) things that irritate you, upset you or hurt your feelings are vital messengers alerting you to stop ignoring something.

Not later. Not tomorrow. Not when you have some time. You, your partner and your relationship need your attention, NOW!

Don't do it alone

Most successful couples don't try to figure it out alone. They get support from an objective third party who is specifically trained and experienced to guide them to the extraordinary relationship that is possible. A relationship professional can support you so that the small things don't become big problems, and the big problems don't become catastrophic.

Partnering together might be exactly what you have been looking for.

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It is possible

- To have an extraordinary relationship and be lovers again, just like you were when you first met.
- To feel passionately loved and excited about each other even if you have drifted pretty far apart.
- To feel safe, secure and adored no matter how long you have felt disconnected.

If you feel the quiet knowing that it's time to step into what's calling you forward, I invite you into a conversation with me.

Each month I open a limited number of (free) private conversations.

If you would like one…

Book A Private Let's Talk Conversation With Me

My private programs are for couples who don't need fixing - just the right way forward.

Cheers to your joy with your partner,

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