

Out of date

Recognizing when a relationship has reached its expiry

If there is one thing for certain in life, it's change, and relationships are no exception. While it's romantic and hopeful to believe they'll last forever, the truth is not all will, and that's okay and normal. Recognizing when a relationship has passed its expiry date is crucial for the well-being of everyone involved. Here are some tips to identify when that time is nearing or has passed.

Self-honesty: You have to start being brutally honest with yourself. Sit with your emotions, your gut, your intuition and listen. We all have an innate sense when things don't feel quite right. Your relationship doesn't need to be in a ball of flames for you to want or need to call it.

Consistent unhappiness: If you are generally stressed, anxious, unsettled, or resentful towards your partner, that can be a pretty big sign. A good relationship should nourish you, not deplete you or increase dysregulation.

Lack of communication: Communication is the lifeline of any relationship. If you don't talk about real things, feelings, your internal world, or shared future vision, or you notice you don't want to talk about these things, it's a red flag.

Lost sense of self: Ask your closest and oldest friends if you're not sure about this one. They'll be able to tell you without the defenses of your own mind. If you don't feel like yourself, or you've lost your spark, or even compromised your values, it might be time to look at the dynamic.

Trust & respect: Any relationship spent worrying about the ability to trust demands extreme amounts of wasted emotional energy, anxiety, and fear. Sometimes trust issues can be repaired, other times, the damage is irreparable. If you notice that you have lost respect for your partner, for whatever reason, this is a significant nail in the coffin. It will be near impossible for you to have a strong, healthy, nurturing, flourishing and equal relationship without this component.



Why settle for anything but the very zest?

Different life paths: Not everyone has the same vision for their life. People change, grow, evolve and some stay the same. You may no longer be compatible. The relationship might not make sense after the kids grow up. If you don't have a shared vision for the future, it might be time to re-imagine who your future is with.

Lack of intimacy: Interest for sex and intimacy can ebb and flow, however extended periods of a complete lack of intimacy (of one or many kinds) can be another sign of the expiry date nearing or having been passed.

More bad times than good: Reflect on the ratio of good times to bad. If your memories and experiences are predominantly negative, and the thought of a future with your partner doesn't bring you joy, it might be time to move on. But don't just settle for 50/50 either. What is a ratio that you would be content with?

Recognizing a relationship has reached its end can be gut-wrenching. Grieving a shared life, letting go of an imagined future, and saying goodbye to someone you've held so close can be deeply painful experiences. However, staying when you know it's not right also bears its own emotional and psychological challenges. Resentment and regret are the two biggest costs, and the more time that passes, the more difficult it is to face those realities. We are all running out of time. What kind of life and love do you want? Though painful, breakups can be a door to healing, growth, new beginnings, and opportunities, if you decide to take them.

Words: **Scout Smith-O'Leary**

Scout is a Relationship Therapist providing counselling to couples & individuals. Based in Manly. Telehealth available. Visit thelovescout.com or call 0410 030 463 for more info or to book a session.

A Little Advice

The Friendship Conundrum

Q. We recently moved to the Northern Beaches with our 4 year old, however the timing meant we had little choice in what pre-school our child attended. During orientation, I discovered none of the children will be attending the same primary school next year and I am worried my child will be overwhelmed by yet another transition and having to make new friends. Should I pull them out and hope I can get into a pre-school closer to their future primary school?

A. I will never forget the traumatic day I had to say goodbye to my pre-school friends... I'm kidding, I barely remember that time of my life, as will your child. But I don't want to dismiss your concerns, they are completely valid, especially given the transition you have already made moving to a new place. But I want to reassure you that kids are resilient and adaptable.

My guess is that you are looking ahead to the first day of school - an already emotional day for a parent, and you are imagining your child's face, scared, shy and alone. I invite you to sit with that feeling for a moment and get curious. Is there any truth to these feelings? Or are they rooted in your own fears and anxiety around the transition? If the latter, that is totally understandable, and I send big hugs.

However, if your child does struggle to make social connections, how can you foster more opportunities to make friends in your local community? Perhaps it's going to a local class or playgroup (check out Playgroupnsw.org.au) or putting a post on your community Facebook page to connect with other parents of kids starting school the same year. My point is, this doesn't need to be a scary transition, but rather, an opportunity to be more intentional with how you build relationships for both yourself and your child.

Good luck

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Business

Why are (most) meetings a waste of time?

Meetings ARE for

- Discussion
- Debate
- Decision making
- Sense checking

Meetings ARE NOT for

- Considering what you want to say
- Thinking out loud
- Reading your notes
- Coming unprepared

Meetings are a valuable tool when they're executed effectively. However, we've all experienced the frustration of wasted time in unproductive meetings. Throughout my work globally, I've discovered a key insight which consistently leads to a breakthrough moment: understanding the requirements for conducting effective meetings.

1. Confident Leadership: A leader who understands the required outcome and is able to effectively communicate to the participants

2. Prepared Participants: attendees who recognise value and come prepared

3. Effective time management: location, run sheet, and note taking (if required)

4. Follow-up action plan: a well-documented and clearly defined accountability plan to ensure progress

Next time you're in a meeting, roughly estimate the collective hourly rate of attendees, the cost of the room and the impact of your absence from your usual workplace. It's an interesting exercise and quickly helps you to recognise the value of productivity.

Whether the meeting intention is to develop relationships, problem solve or discuss the value of a project it's crucial that everyone attending understands the purpose. By clarifying the goal, you are allowing individuals to assess the value of their attendance, prioritise, prepare and take accountability for their contribution.

In essence, the one tip that creates that "aha" moment is to define the purpose of the meeting clearly and ensure effective communication of that purpose to all attendees. This simple strategy can transform meetings from time consuming frustrations to productive sessions driving your business strategy.

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