

Is Your Relationship Like the Continental Drift?

Continental Drift is a term as useful in relationship as it is in geology. Movement apart is, at first, virtually imperceptible- but in time separate eco-systems may evolve.

People may be located on the continents whose roots may be the same, but whose language, symbols, and customs are different. In the high stress of our times relationships may drift in a similar manner, though in much less time. Take heart, it happens sooner or later in most partnerships, but relationships, unlike continents, do not have to drift until the small stream becomes an ocean.

There are a number of signs that movement is starting. Facing up to these is a good start to important conversation that can make a difference.

Has saying, I love you, become a ritual or habit rather than an affirmation?

Are you feeling alone, unappreciated, or that the relationship has become secondary to other responsibilities?

Do you feel separate from your partner?

Such common emotions may appear obvious, but facing them may not be because of fear of rejection.

There may be fear the other partner will trivialize the feelings or there may be fear that there is an even bigger problem lurking. Life provides lots of challenges, but facing them as they come along is much easier without the drift.

Several simple things can make a big difference in stopping this process.

Be honest with yourself about how you are feeling.

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Set a time where the relationship comes first. As difficult as it is, other things will need to be screened out including family. As successful consultants interviewed universally pointed out, a client can request help or information at any time. But that process can be managed so that people know when you will be off line short of a serious crisis. This means setting expectations and boundaries.

Be creative in your way of approaching your relationship. Do special things to indicate that you care. Flowers or little reminder gifts are still good, but, if you feel you lack creativity, then consider asking someone for ideas. Brief notes thanking someone rather than just saying, Thank you, can make a huge difference and is just as important to other relationships. A number of people make this a discipline, as in this world of email and other fast paced communication, an affirming note in the mail or on the desk says, You are important to me.

Make a plan as to how you and your partner plan to address the sense of separation. It is amazing that people, who have so much competence for other things such as their work or managing their home, do not use these same skills for managing their relationship. Use your full capacity for achievement rather than let resentment and isolation build.

When a partner dies, one seldom hears, They were given too much love. More often is, I wish I had said and done more. Being willing to focus on the relationship allows one to understand the symbols and language of the other person. Though there may be a tendency given the pressures of the modern world to become more isolated, it is very possible for either partner to reduce or even stop the relationship drift. As with most things, other than blind luck, one gets out of something what one puts in. One does not have to allow Continental Drift.

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