

Relationships: When to stay, when to walk away, and when to run!

“In my last relationship I realized that my partner was self-centered, self-serving, arrogant, ignorant, unfaithful, hypercritical, abusive, an under-achiever and an alcoholic. I was devastated when he broke up with me.” www.TigressLuv.com

How do you know when it's time to end a relationship?

Never betray your own better judgment or your values. End a relationship before you compromise your self-respect or physical safety. There are four conditions when most psychologists and clergy agree that ending a relationship may be the right action. The four conditions are known as the “Four A’s”:

1. **Abandonment** (The partner left and is not coming back).
2. **Addiction** (Especially if children need protection).
3. **Abuse** (Especially physical abuse or if children need protection).
4. **Adultery** (Ending the relationship is an option, not a requirement).

Relationship problems unrelated to the “4 A’s” require deeper investigation. Ending committed relationships simply because one or both partners’ “*fell out of love*,” “*got bored*” or “*grew apart*” leaves each partner at risk of regrets or of repeating the same mistakes in future relationships.

Before you walk away, answer the following 8 questions:

- *Yes No** 1. Is this relationship harmful or dangerous to me or to my children?
- Yes No.** 2. If I had a son or daughter in a relationship exactly like mine, would I advise ending the relationship?
- Yes No.** 3. Have I treated my partner as I wish to be treated?
- Yes No.** 4. Have I maintained my sense of independence and encouraged my partner to do the same?
- Yes No.** 5. Have I continued to live true to my values and beliefs during this relationship?
- Yes No.** 6. Have I exhausted all options to communicate openly in this relationship?
- Yes No.** 7. Have I exhausted all options to negotiate conflict?
- Yes No.** 8. Could I respect myself for walking away from this commitment?

***Scoring: Answering “Yes” to question #1** indicates the need for immediate legal action and professional intervention.

“Yes” to questions #2 through #8 indicates that your values are aligned with ending the relationship.

“No” to questions #3 through #8 indicates a need to seek additional resources or professional help to improve problem solving and communication skills.