

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 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.