



## Mars & Venus

# BYE BYE LOVE

Why wait for your relationship to reach breaking point before you notice something is wrong?

by Colleen Braganza

**E**ACH ONE of us would have gone through the following situation ourselves or have had a friend who has. It's like a bad movie. You are happy; you are in love. It's a beautiful world, the sun is shining, the birds singing, your partner is mad about you as you are about her / him. And then your partner comes back home one day and says, 'Hey I want out. This is not working.' Uhhhh.

How did you miss all the signs?

Experts say this happens all the time because most of us never think unpleasant things will happen to us. So we totally miss all the warning signs that tell us all is not well, or there is perhaps something seriously wrong with one's relationship. And by the time, you realise something is wrong, it is too late.

"Most couples deny something is wrong with their relationship till they reach a breaking point," says Esha Singh, psychologist with Max Health Care. "They live with the illusion that 'everything is fine,' 'we are a perfect couple' or 'this cannot happen to me.' So when it happens, they are shell-shocked," says Esha.

Here are some signs that your relationship is under pressure.

### Has anything changed drastically?

Each couple is different. So if one couple is used to eating a meal together at least once a day, another couple may well be satisfied with eating together once a week. Depending on what you are used to, be alert for any change. Do you talk less? Did you eat together more often, go out more often, spend weekends with each other more often but now your partner suddenly doesn't have time for you? Have your partner's work hours suddenly increased?

"Taking away what existed or depriving you of what existed is a warning sign," says lifestyle management expert Dr Rachna Singh. So, if your partner is not satisfying you like he / she did earlier, there may be an underlying problem.

### Are you suddenly over-dependent on your partner?

When there is love in a relationship, you are secure in it. But when you sense, even subcon-

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sciously, that the love is vanishing, the person who is at the receiving end of his / her partner's disinterest, holds on even tighter. This certainly takes a toll on the 'sufferer'.

Dr Rachna Singh suggests you ask yourself some questions to see if you are being overly dependent on your partner all of a sudden: Have I changed? Have I changed to please my partner? Are there some things I wasn't doing earlier but am doing now? Am I bending over backwards to please him / her?

### When you receive good news, your partner is not the first person you want to break the news to.

When you get a raise or promotion or win the lottery, don't you immediately want to break the good news to the person you are closest to? Yes,



**DID YOU EAT TOGETHER MORE OFTEN AND NOW DON'T?**

parents top that list for many of us. But if you are in a relationship, you'd logically want to break the good news to your spouse or partner as well as your parents. "When your partner stops sharing things with you, when s / he calls someone else to break good news and 'informs' you only as an afterthought, something is not right," says psychologist Esha Singh.

### Have family, friends noticed and asked if there's a problem?

Most often, when couples are in denial that their relationship is on the rocks, it takes a third party to notice that all is not well. Hence, never discount hints from family or friends. "They may notice and ask 'you both were not like this before, what's happened?'" says Dr Rachna Singh. "Be sensitive to what they say because they always have something to warn you."

### Is your relationship stagnant?

Most people set milestones in their relationships. So, if you are dating seriously, you may have a timeframe in which you plan to live-in / get engaged / married. Or you may make long term plans like saving for a holiday abroad or the purchase of a house or car. But if your partner isn't in the least bit keen on discussing what you will be doing two years from now, your break up is staring you in the face. "When your partner does not show any interest in the future or if he / she shows complete disinterest in your activities, it means communication is dying down. And a breakdown in communication is fatal for any relationship," says Dr Rachna Singh.

cbraganza@hindustantimes.com

## QUICK FIX

Once you sense there is something wrong with your relationship, it's best to tackle it right away before things deteriorate beyond redemption. "When you feel something is wrong, don't ignore it. The moment there is unease, or irritability is high or you feel you are avoiding each other, discuss it. You don't have to be confrontational. Say, 'I'm feeling this way, are you?' If your partner is too, discuss what can possibly be the matter and see whether you want to resolve it on your own or take professional help. Just don't let it linger," says Esha Singh psychologist with Max Health Care.