

Colors of An Argument

If it's time to calm down your arguments, then give this a try:

If you are a high-conflict couple, then you typically get too emotionally intense when having a disagreement. You don't know when to back down or take a break from an argument. Damage is done. Things are said that leave permanent scars. Perhaps you are trying to win or be right or you aren't being heard and then you stop listening.

Let's look at arguments using the analogy of a tachometer. For those of you that don't know, it's the gauge on a manual shift vehicle that shows the revolutions per minute (RPM) of the engine. If you rev the engine too high, you can damage it. On a motorcycle, as you increase the engine speed, the needle moves from the green zone, through the yellow zone, and if you really press it, into the red zone. If the needle spends too much time in the red zone, the engine will get too hot and either blow or gasket or seize up the engine. Then it's going to cost you a lot of money.

Do you see where I'm going here? There are consequences to going into the red zone. If you ignore the yellow warnings in relationships, and keep arguing until you see red, you may say things (or do things) you'll regret...

My suggestion is to know your yellow zone. If you could say to your partner, "I'm in the yellow-zone and I need a break," you can save yourself and them a lot of grief. Take a break. When you reach the red zone in a conversation, your intellect shuts down anyway. You're all reptilian brain. When you are seeing red, you don't make logical sense. You are almost pure emotion. It's at this point that you never get a decent result because it isn't a conversation, but a battle.

Some couples I've worked with have taken my suggestion to just raise their fingers on a one to ten scale with their partner. This allows them to show that they are reaching a 4 of 10 and are about to need a break. At that point a change is needed. You must do this because, if not, everything after the level 5 intensity is a rollercoaster ride down the other side up to a 10, where you have no control and no breaks.

Try a smile. Try a deep breath (and remember to empty your lungs first so you get a full one). Try hugging. Try anything... Just stop the string of thought that will send you into the red zone.

Courtesy of:



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