

The Wall Between Us

One of my visual images of intimacy, or the lack of it, between partners is this: Each resentment that we hold against our partner is like a brick in a wall between us. Unless we are perfect in our communication patterns (and no one is), and we are masters of conflict resolution (haven't seen that either), then we will have resentments. In other words, given that we simply are not perfect, we will have resentments in our relationships.

Since the little stings, and the resulting resentments are a given in relationships, then we need to build the skills, get the tools, and the strength to remove our resentments. And to be close, we must remove those bricks.

One way of looking at this is to assume that on a 0-10 scale our relationship could be hovering in the 9 range. Then an upset happens. If it's an everyday sort of upset, it might knock us down to an 8. What we need to do is use skills, tools, strength, and bravery to heal the upset. Taking us right back up to a 9. We need to take care of it right away. If we don't do this on a continual basis, things erode, and people become bitter, deeply resentful, and even contemptuous toward one another. Sadly, that's often when I get the phone call for help. And, of course, that means we have a lot of bricks and a long process of healing ahead of us. Therapy can help set the stage with this, creating a safe atmosphere so we can work through it and risk looking over the wall and getting close again.

Unfortunately, in this model, there are two walls; yours and your partner's. Often one partner will pound on the others wall, or request, or whine, or demand that they reduce their wall and come closer. That doesn't work very well. You can't change your partner; you can only change yourself. So, you need to work on your wall. You need to clear your own withholds and resentments toward your partner and wait for them to work on theirs.

You can sometimes help your partner reduce their wall a bit by being kind, empathetic, and maybe even cherishing your beloved when things get rough. If you do, then your partner can begin to feel safer in your presence, and become more interested in closeness and intimacy, and then remove one of their bricks on their own, allowing the two of you to be closer. If you choose to drop your resentments towards your partner, then you can be closer too — and it helps if you are treating one another with kindness and compassion.

So, I encourage you to be more loving and to cherish your beloved, as a way of making the resentments and the little stings in life less significant. Dismantle *your* wall.

Courtesy of:



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