

Relationships

Are you in control?

Relationship Coach **Vicky van Praag** looks at how trying to control your partner can ruin your relationship and spoil your life.

Imagine a relationship in which your every need was attended to before you even felt it. A relationship full of presents, flowers, kisses, and long talks. When we first fall in love our partner gives us all the attention we could ever want. After several years together the picture is usually a little emptier. Unfortunately, there is nothing quite so painful as a relationship in which we feel ignored.

When a man is ignored he will usually react by withdrawing. When a woman is ignored she'll usually turn to control for comfort. Driven by the fear that her partner doesn't want to be with her, she will nag and push him, berate and badger him, trying to squeeze the attention out of him she's scared he won't give her on his own. Sadly, not only does she suffer the pain of a lonely, loveless life, but her actions only make the situation worse.

"None of us likes to be controlled, and we will go into automatic resistance when pushed to do something, no matter what it might be."

When a woman tries to control her husband he will resist. This has nothing to do with how much he loves her. None of us likes to be controlled, and we will go into automatic resistance when pushed to do something, no matter what it might be. It is hard for a woman trapped in the cycle of control to understand this. She believes that if her



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husband loved her, he'd do what she wanted. She's not quite aware just how unattractive controlling behaviour is. She only knows that she feels more alone and unloved the more those around her withdraw. So she pushes harder, and they withdraw farther.

The good news is that it is only controlling behaviour that people dislike, not the controller themselves. And if the controller stopped the behaviour they would find their loved ones responded very well. And if they don't stop they'll never feel loved, because we can never really value something we force from people. Controllers can't receive a spontaneous act of love because they never leave room for it. The only way out of this painful cycle is to take a risk. Take a risk that the love might come to you, without you having to push for it. Stop controlling, stop asking, stop talking; step back and let love show itself. Once we stop pushing others to do what we want they will gradually soften their resistance, they have the opportunity to show us love on their own. And, even if they don't, it's not the end of the world. Those that love you will love you, and those that don't you are better off without. Being a

control freak is too big a price to pay to hold onto a relationship that would not survive without it. While the pain of a broken relationship will heal, the pain of living as a control freak lasts a lifetime.



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Understanding can help

Counsellor **Ian Woodroffe** looks at learning opportunities from the world of counselling



Someone who had read this column on bereavement asked me how she could learn more about bereavement in order to help a friend.

The answer is with difficulty unless you want to read and the shelves of the bookshops are full of bereavement books so which to choose?

Bereavement is on the curriculum for schools but even teachers find the subject hard, as many teachers have not received any training in the subject.

Some people learn best by listening and sharing with others.

With this in mind I have decided to create some learning opportunities for people who are interested or who work with the subject. There will be a series of one-day workshops and after completing the first anyone who wishes to study at a greater level can go onto further workshops.

The first workshop will be informative and presented in an interesting way that will make the subject very interesting to those who attend. We will look at what happens to humans and animals around the time of separation and loss. You will notice that I use the term separation and loss because we can often have the same behaviours following a relationship break-up or during the time of redundancy.

I can promise attendees a fascinating day of helpful learning.

The day will be on the 4th June at Parkside Community College from 10am-4pm. The cost is £35.00.

If you are interested please contact Sue on 01223 512246 Or 07941403960

If you read this and cannot contact Sue it is possible to turn up on the day –bring your own lunch!

Ian Woodroffe is a BACP accredited counsellor and supervisor and has been teaching bereavement to degree level for 10years.

He has broadcast on the subject for radio and television.

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