

## Dual-Professionals In Relationship – Does It Work?

So, Bill Clinton will be fast and furious on the campaign trail supporting Hillary's bid for the Presidency. Good news or bad news? In 2004, Howard Dean's spouse, Judith Steinberg Dean, stayed more "stage right" and was seen infrequently. Good news or bad news?

The question that surfaces is this: Can two full-time, fully-engaged-in-a-professional-life partners maintain a conscious, healthy, intimate relationship?

When two professionals spend a great deal of, or an inordinate amount of time, pursuing their careers, is there time to pursue each other on a consistent basis, that is, to continue to see their relationship as "fresh" every day, to continue to "work" on their relationship consistently, and actually "be" in a relationship on a true like- and love-level consistently?

Or, does something (read: someone) have to give? Does the relationship begin to evaporate to the degree that the two spouses or partners are more roommates, and ships passing in the night, than they are committed and intimate partners? Do the partners lose sight of "shared values" and the notion of a "we" and replace these relationship foundational supports with "my values" and "your values" and "I" and "you"?

Other signs that a dual-professional relationship might be in trouble are:

- The partners are becoming emotionally distant, where just talking to one another is a challenge, where one or both partners feel they are taken for granted, one feels the other doesn't "know me", or both are spending less and less time together
- Job-tension is interfering with the relationship; one or both partners are not concerned about the other's professional stresses or listen with compassion or understanding about the other's job stress-related issues; one partner takes out their job stress on the other
- The passion is seeping out of the relationship, touching infrequently, speaking less lovingly toward one another and rarely physically holding one another;
- Sex is an issue – less frequent, less satisfying, less discussion about, less loving
- Life changes (birth of a child, a relocation, a death of a loved one or an illness, etc.) become "elephants in the room" – where compromise is lacking, where partners grow distant instead of closer, where events trigger tension and conflict instead of closeness, where worry is a thread that permeates the relationship.
- One or both partners become too-socially-close with someone outside their relationship and/or one or both start to become hyper-vigilant about, or jealous of, the other; where trust is fading; where feelings of betrayal and suspicion are rampant;
- Fighting becomes the norm; fights erupt over almost any issue or event - small or large; where anger and irritation seem to rule everyday emotions and feelings; where the partners engage in consistent nit-picking, bickering, and nagging in an attempt to hurt the other; where mutual appreciation and respect are lacking
- One or both partners begin to abuse chemical- and non-chemical drugs or engage in repulsive behaviors; where one or both feel they are not in the relationship they had "signed on" for; that one or both partners are disappointed by the relationship.
- The partners are no longer a team, but two disparate individuals; sharing chores and household duties is no longer the norm; the partners are growing apart, not together; there is an imbalance in assuming financial responsibility;

- The partners no longer share power and influence; one or both feel disempowered in decision-making; one partner becomes overbearing, a bully, or more dominating; one partner assumes a passive and submissive role;
- Fun is lacking; the partners have little to no real fun; the partners really don't truly enjoy one another's company; stress trumps fun; the partners have selfishly become absorbed in their own interests and activities, ignoring the other.
- There is a lack of spiritual connection; the partners no longer share once-held mutual beliefs; the partners cannot discuss new ideas or spiritual issues;

So, can two high-powered professional folks truly support one another emotionally, physically, mentally, spiritually and socially? Can a dual-profession relationship be a win-win relationship? Do high-powered couples more commonly grow apart than grow together?

With late night work/dinners, travel, children and their needs and wants, pet care, medical appointments, school meetings, work around the house/living space, shopping and all the rest, can a loving, caring, committed (in deed as well as thought) relationship between two fully-engaged professionals work? Does it work? For you?

Where does "relationship" lie on your list of priorities? And do your actions (not just thoughts) reflect that priority? Or, does your relationship have to give and, if so, are the consequences? What compromises do you make; what non-negotiable issues exist vis-à-vis your relationship requirements, wants and needs? What choices are you making when it comes to your relationship? Are your choices conscious and healthy, or reactive and unhealthy? Is relationship failure a real or potential outcome? Are you growing together, or growing apart?

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