



Marriage Rules[©]

“TIME TO SAY HELLO”

By: Larry B. Gelman, Psy. D.

Every couple will have their fair share of disagreements. After all, each person must meet or address their own self-interest before they are sufficiently resourced to tend to the interests of the other.

Then again, the “magical mystery tour” we call marriage may purport to achieve loftier aspirations than one’s own singular satisfactions.

“Fairy tales which come true, it could happen to you,” lead us to believe in “happily ever after”, but fail to tell the rest of the story of the in-between times, which are not always so very happy and good.

When a contentious couple is not behaving as a collaborative team, but rather act as stubborn, non-matching “separates”, whereby neither “I” is prepared to give an inch to the other “I”, either “for the love of God or money”, then each will dig in for a long, hard, destructive, non-constructive battle, usually, to a bitter end.

Wounded pride and hurt feelings compound matters further and off to the races they go, like ships passing in the night, concluding that “never the twain shall meet”.

Andrea Boccelli and Sarah Brightman have made famous their haunting and poignant song, *Time to Say Goodbye*.

For our purposes, here, a wise general knows when to retreat and, as such, there is no shame in backing off or backing down.

When you and your beloved are at your worst, is probably not the best time to resolve thorny problems exacerbated by harsh words and negative emotions and rigidified, positional stands.

Better to distance yourself from the fray and calm down so you can come back another time or on a different day.

There is great merit in a cooling off period.

Take a deep breath and count slowly to a thousand!

Then see if you can argue the other person’s point of view, as well as, and, preferably, better than they!

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Only then will it be possible to empathize with their frame of reference and experience something from a perspective other than your own.

At this point, “resistance is futile” and walls begin to dissolve.

Time to Say Goodbye need not last very long.

It can be a mutual signal any one person can temporarily utilize until the smoke clears so both can eventually put out the fire together.

When the storm clears, all that will remain is the two of you...a healthy, loving and collaborating couple...with plenty of “Time to Say Hello”!

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