

Violence in Intimate Relationships

Are you in an intimate relationship where violence is a part of your exchange? Does one or the other of you lash out physically toward the other? Do you want it to stop?

There is lots of information out there about intimate partner violence. Just google the term and today there were 4,680,000 entries on the topic. Many offer research, explanations, opinions and advice.

I am not here to argue for you to stay or get out of a relationship where you are inflicting or receiving violence in your relationship. What I do want you to do, however, is look at your motivation and decide if your behavior and your choices are going to lead you in the direction you want to go for your life.

Violence Users:

Are you the partner in the relationship who resorts to physical violence when frustrated, upset or angry? Is this the person you want to be in your loving, intimate relationship? What do you want that you are trying to get by punishing your partner physically?

Because I am a firm believer in Dr. Glasser's Choice Theory®, I know that all behavior is purposeful. It is unacceptable to say, "He or she **made** me do it!" No one has the power to make us do anything we don't want to do. If you think you can, have you ever tried to make a baby eat who wasn't hungry?

Sure you can crank up the fear and/or pain factor far enough to get just about anybody to do anything but if it is important enough, a person will choose to die rather than do something they don't want to do and you can't **make** them.

Stephen Covey tells us that between a stimulus and a response is a gap and in that gap is our ability to choose our response. Maybe you are giving away your choice to your partner but I don't buy it. You choose violence because it gets you something you want.

Maybe you are confusing fear with respect. Maybe all you care about is compliance and quality is not an important factor to you. Maybe you are scared and being angry helps you to feel stronger. Maybe these are patterns you learned as a child.

Whatever the reason, if you want to have a loving relationship with another person, do you think violence is the best way of getting one?

If a loving, caring, committed relationship is what you want, then you must give up the idea of intimidating your partner with violence and begin to allow that person to live life on their terms. Ensure that they are in the relationship because they want to be, not because they are too scared to leave. This new relationship will be based on love and real respect—not fear.

Violence Receivers:

Are you in a relationship with a partner who hurts you physically? Is this the kind of relationship you hoped for? Does he or she treat you good enough other times to make up for the times he or she hurts you? Are you holding onto the hope that it will change?

Forget the thought that he or she will change. That may or may not happen but you have no control over what your partner chooses to do or not to do. You can only control yourself. What if your partner never changes? Would you still stay in the relationship?

What do you get by staying in an abusive relationship? Is this the best you think you deserve? Do you believe that he or she hurts you because you ask for it? Do you believe that commitment means you will never leave until death parts you? Do you hold onto that hope that he or she can be the person you dream of?

Whatever your reason, I want you to examine your motives. Ask yourself the question, "Is staying more painful than starting over?" When it is, you will seek whatever help you need to make the move to leave.