

Dawn Kaffel Blog Archive: Difficulties with Commitment in your Relationship - 2017

January was a month where we were bombarded in the press about the need to make new year resolutions, make changes to our work life balance, loose weight and go to the gym more, eat less sugar and more complex carbohydrates.

In my counselling room recently, I have been aware of how many couples hope and expect 2016 will be the time when their relationship moves forward. However when the subject comes up couples can be faced with very different views on what moving forward means for both of them.

It is clear that making a commitment to a relationship means different things for different people: for some its moving in together, for others its getting engaged, wanting marriage or deciding to have a baby together. For many, these steps come easily and for others making a decision to commit can bring a great deal of distress and disharmony to an otherwise healthy relationship and often results in looking for help from a couples counsellor.

I often encounter couples who appear to present with a really secure and connected relationship and this all goes out the window when one partner wants the relationship to move forward as a natural progression of a committed relationship and the other is in no hurry to change this and is more than happy to stay where they are.

Often discussing moving forward and making a commitment brings happiness and excitement for one and overwhelming anxiety and panic to the other. This is something that affects both men and women.

Some sessions with a counsellor would help partners to look at the following`;

1. What are some of the causes of Commitment Anxiety?

- Fear of intimacy and deep emotional connection
- A damaging previous break up or ending of a relationship
- A belief this is not the 'right relationship'
- Trust issues
- Difficulty with attachment needs being met in childhood
- Experience of separation or divorce in parents relationship
- Fear of rejection
- Negative media exposure on unhappiness of committed relationships
- Over focusing on divorce statistics
- Fear of losing independence and being tied down
- Not wanting to parent

2. What are the effects of Commitment issues on a relationship?

- Tendency to avoid long- term relationships
- Closeness and safety is replaced by distance and avoidance
- Risk of developing depression
- Loss of confidence in self and partner
- Increase in conflict to avoid discussion

Treating commitment issues in couples therapy

An experienced therapist can help identify potential causes of commitment issues in a couple relationship and explore useful ways to work through these issues.

Couples can learn how to understand their fears of commitment, where and how it may have originated and how a rigid way of thinking can be quite paralysing. It opens the way for partners to better discuss fears of making a commitment with each other in a calmer, safer way, and hopefully develops an ability to be more truthful and open about their needs and desires.

Dawn Kaffel

If you would like to discuss things further or to make an appointment, you can call me on 07976 403741 or (020) 8959 9528.