

Dawn Kaffel Blog Archive: Is giving up on marriage easier than working on it? - 2017

Over the past week I was lucky to attend two very different events that I found very interesting and which shared a common thread – the importance of resilience and survival.

The first was a strictly orthodox Jewish wedding where Rabbis from every sect and from all over the world were in attendance. One of the UK's most eminent Rabbis was asked to address the bride and bridegroom under the wedding canopy. What was surprising was how he used this opportunity not to preach about Judaism and orthodoxy but focused on the very young couple in front of him and the importance of working on a marriage, of putting each other first, of showing each other how you love, care and show respect for each other every day for the rest of their lives. Without working on a marriage, he said, a long happy relationship is not guaranteed.

The second event was at Jewish Book week where Lady Rosa Lipworth and Dorit Oliver-Wolff were in discussion with the author Anne Sebba. Here were two women who as very young children endured intense pain and loss of their families during the Holocaust to survive against all odds through their incredible bravery and fortitude. They never gave up hope and today they inspire others with the resilience that kept them alive.

Today we are living in very uncertain times and I have wondered for some time how these feelings of unease and disquiet impacts on our couple relationships.

Is it a mere coincidence that for some time now many more couples are coming to counselling wanting to give up on their marriages without really trying to understand or work on their relationships?

When couples struggle to live together in any meaningful way they often present with very negative feelings towards each other. They get caught up in patterns of behaviour that leave them feeling very emotionally disconnected and pretty lost and alone in a marriage. Resentments run very high and often become the shopping list for incompatibility.

For some couples the growing apart has taken years, for other it's very sudden. By the time couples come to seek help from a counsellor, they are often so disconnected that it does feel easier to bail out rather than make the decision to really work on their relationship.

We are living in a quick fix world and some clients give up very easily, believing life will be different with someone else. Some clients meet at a very young age and years later are unable to manage the loss of the life they could have had before marriage. Others feel marriage makes them feel old and after

40 or 50 years of marriage yearn for something different before its too late. Loss of intimacy and sex is often another excuse to exit.

Whatever the reasons – we seem to find it much easier to work on our jobs and achieve success in our careers than we do in working on our marriages to stay strong and resilient together through the difficult times. Sometimes couples never had the experience of seeing their parents really work through difficulties.

So before you give up and walk out of a relationship because you have fallen out of love and feel so detached and disconnected from your partner, take some time to talk to a counsellor who will help make sense of the emotional distress that entangles many couples. Emotional Focused Therapy helps us to understand how to be more open and attuned and responsive to our partners and re-establish an emotional connection to grow together as a team. This takes hard work, strength and resilience.

Letting Go by Dorit Oliver-Wolff

*The urge to live life in the fast lane
Has become an obsession with me
If only I knew how to let go
Let go of the past
Let go of the pain
Let go of others
Let go of me
Just drifting in weightlessness
In no man's land
Without gravity
To pull me in either direction
Just drifting
With nature and myself
In unity with the omnipotent force
Where time stops
And the endless loop
Of eternal continuity
Takes away the fear of entering one's time
of the inevitable end.*

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