

The Talk: Crossroads for relationships

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At some point in almost every budding relationship, there comes a time for "The Talk."



This is where someone (usually, but not always, the woman) wants to know where she stands, where the relationship is going and if in fact it is a "relationship" or just really rad, regular sex.

No one likes "The Talk" and if you're lucky, you don't need to have one - your partner's actions speak louder than any words could ever do.

But some people are harder to read than others, and if that's the case, "The Talk" may be inevitable.

Which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Sometimes it's as simple and pain-free as:

"You in?"

"I'm in."

Other times, however, it can be a heavy-hearted disaster where insecurities cloud judgment and everything comes out the wrong way.

In other words, it can be the kiss of death for a new relationship. That's why Lori Yusishen, a registered counsellor and relationship expert, has the following five tips for people thinking about having "The Talk" with a new partner:

Give a head's up

Usually the conversation instigator has had some time to think about "The Talk," while the other person is caught totally off guard.

"That automatically puts him/her in a defensive awkward position," says Yusishen, "so they're reacting as opposed to interacting."

And when someone feels cornered, they go into fight or flight mode - not good.

You don't have to pencil in an appointment for "The Talk," but you could say something like, "I really like you and I was wondering if you'd like to talk about where this heading?"

When's good for you?"

Stay calm

Make sure you feel grounded beforehand and be clear about what it is you want to elicit from the conversation.

So if you want to find out if you're on the same page in terms of where the relationship is going - say so!

Don't come out swinging with threatening statements about seeing other people.

All that fronting will do is instigate a messy one-upmanship.

Use 'I' Statements

It's an oldie, but a goodie. And therapists like this one for a reason: it works.

Basically, you want to avoid statements like, "You need to step up or I'm outie."

Instead, go for the more honest, "I'm really into you and I want to know if you feel the same way."

Ease into It

Don't dive right into talk of marriage.

Dip your feet into the water by finding out how that person feels about you.

Know when

When emotions are running high, "The Talk" can go south real fast.

So if you feel like the conversation is circling the drain and things are being said that neither of you really mean, you may have to abort mission.

And that's OK. Just say, "You know what, this isn't how I wanted this to go down. Can we pick this up another time?"

Source: Lori Yusishen, BHEc, MMFT

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