

Relationship Rehab Show

Episode 41: The Rules of a Good Time Out

Many clients think they are acting in a superior way when they walk away from an argument rather than participate in the escalation of one.

There is some validity in refusing to stay engaged when a fight is going nowhere. But silence or escape is only a partial, temporary solution to conflict.

As part of what we learned to save our marriage, Jim and I learned better anger management skills. For instance, I learned to monitor my internal emotional temperature. When I was nearly the place where I'd say something I'd have to apologize for later, I learned to call "Time Out" on myself.

It's what comes next that makes it a "Good Time Out," rather than a behavior that leaves your partner frustrated and the issue unresolved.

1. Agree on a time out signal or word with your partner should you need it.
2. When you call a Time Out on yourself, estimate how much time you'll need to calm down your feelings.
3. Say to your partner, "I need a time out. I'll be back in 30 minutes to resume our Skilled Discussion."
4. Leave to vent, discharge your anger or hurt elsewhere for the purpose of regaining respect in the conversation.
5. Partner, you be quiet as soon as your partner says she/he needs a time out. Do not try to get the last word in.
6. When your 30 minutes (as an example) is over, plan how you're going to respectfully say whatever you need to say in the Skilled Discussion. Then,
7. Return to the Skilled Discussion when you promised you would. Keeping your word builds trust with your partner.

These are the rules of a Good Time Out! Good Time Outs save relationships!

Nancy Landrum

www.RelationshipRehabCoach.com