

SOS Détresse

Who am I? Who will I be with you?

These days, many people feel increasingly lost and are unsure of their identity. They wonder how they should live their lives and question their choice of norms and values.

Society no longer provides answers to guide them as to what is right or wrong in critical moments. This means that although they have more freedom and options, the image they have of their own identity is constantly put into question in new ways and with each new challenge. This can lead to doubts and to a lack of confidence. At a time where there are less reference points, they are left with only a vague sense of identity. Nevertheless, each person needs to feel valued by the people around them.

In this increasingly complex environment, where it is difficult to gain and maintain a real feeling of self, being part of a couple can have even more significance. A partnership is perceived as a privileged place where you can be yourselves and where you want to be acknowledged and accepted in your own unique way. It is where you hope to find security and loyalty. Conflicts within a couple often stem from unfulfilled expectations and when the need to be acknowledged in a certain specific way has not been satisfied.

Living for your partner

Society used to help people to get their bearings, but these days partnerships often fulfil this function. Previously, life was determined by the definition of roles and status. These days, individual projects and aspirations of a person must fit harmoniously with those of their partner. A partner becomes the main reference point for any personal fulfilment. It is them who defines you. Therefore they allow you to get your bearings, whilst making their own views and aspirations be valued and they therefore impose limits on our own development. A partner can also support you and help you to live and enjoy the aspects of your personality that you cherish the most. Problems appear when one partner is too dependent on the judgement of the other and when they subordinate their own views and needs to the wishes of the other.

A partner's appreciation

A partner is also very important as a source of appreciation and approval. People are often overwhelmed by the demands of society, which needs efficient people. When these expectations are added to people's own tendencies to outdo themselves all the time, a person is liable to experience feelings of incompetence and doubts as to their

own value. Their partner is often the person who should correct the imbalance and feelings of insecurity by showing their love and appreciation. To feel appreciated, it to feel that the other person accepts you fully, warts and all, and that the other is interested in all aspects of your personality. Weaknesses are often personality traits which we do not like, which we try to hide. If these aspects are accepted by our partner, they are easier for us to accept ourselves and integrate them into our personality.

When appreciation is missing

These needs for approval can weigh heavily on a couple's relationship. Giving a partner the attention and empathy that they want or need, requires a person to have enough strength, stability and self-confidence themselves. Many factors can prevent one or other of the partners from having enough energy to be able to manage this, particularly in times of crisis: it may be due to dissatisfaction, problems at work, unemployment, financial difficulties, difficult family relationships, or even illness. These may be compounded by a lack of time, insufficient social contacts and little familial support.

If tensions weigh heavily on a couple for a long time and if they lack the resources to deal with them, the quality of their bond can be significantly weakened. Partners both risk feeling neglected by the other. They can feel overwhelmed by the situation, blame each other and feel that this blame is unfair. A vicious circle can develop until they are worn out and become enemies. To avoid this dangerous spiral it is important to identify the factors that cause the most strain. As soon as it is clear which points lead to the most difficulties, the problems in the relationship can be viewed in a different light and the efforts of each partner to resolve them can be better appreciated.

When a partner is a killjoy

Relationship problems often arise when one partner doesn't understand or can't maintain their vision of their own identity. When we live as a couple, we like to feel accepted and supported for who we are. Each person has their ambitions in life and it is vital that both sides make compromises. A plan for building a life together can therefore compete with the ability to achieve your own projects or professional career. Planning to have children can put an end to a lifestyle that was once enjoyed, or lead to hobbies or activities being neglected for a long time. Sometimes we blame our partners, if we don't achieve our life goals, even though these may have been idealised. Our partner can become the scapegoat for all the frustrations and unrealised plans. We only see what we are missing, what we have had to give up and therefore not understand what we are gaining by sharing our lives with our partner. By blaming the other, we forget that every choice brings benefits but may also results in some sacrifices, but without it meaning that we have to give up on ourselves.

Finding new priorities

Seeking fulfilment only through your partnership is a disproportionate expectation which will weigh heavily on a relationship. This pressure can lead to too many

conflicts and make love fade away. You need to be aware of this and protect the couple from the illusion that it is possible to share everything. Each relationship benefits from the fact that both partners have their own space to develop individual interests and friendships. We feel freer if we also have other outside contacts who help us grow. The main thing is to preserve the unique and privileged bond with your partner. You need to find a balance, which is beneficial and satisfying to both, between each one's individual aspirations and the commitment to your partner.