

Heidi Klum and Seal: What Blew Up Their Marriage?



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After almost seven years of marriage, Heidi Klum and Seal have decided to part ways. Many people were surprised by their announcement, since they made such a point of telling the public how truly happy they were. For a time, they even seemed like a model couple, defying the odds with two high-powered careers and balancing that with their home life, which included four children, three together and one from Heidi's previous relationship whom Seal adopted. Now, however, it seems that the separation may have been in the works for sometime as they dealt with something more than their love,

success and family: Seal's reported anger issues.

TMZ was the first to report that the pop singer has a "volcanic temper," and that his inability to control his anger has become too much for Heidi to take, in part because it is affecting their children. They may very well have been honest about their love for each other, but dealing with an angry spouse can take a toll on a marriage, even a seemingly strong one.

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The reason couples can go on for so long in this situation is that the outbursts are often self-contained, and when they are over, they are over. Life goes back to normal. That is, until the next one. For a while you learn to live between the explosions in the land mines and focus on the good while you can. However, it eventually comes down to this: in an intimate relationship, everyone ultimately seeks a loving and safe shelter, a place where you can let down your guard and know someone is looking out for you. You want to be able to trust that your partner has your best interests at heart.

When one of the partners has frequent temper tantrums, that feeling of safety is slowly etched away. Over time, you lose the sense of sanctuary and begin to feel fearful and anxious knowing that at any time your spouse might blow up. If you aren't in physical harm's way, you are at the very least in emotional harm's way. When your spouse rages, you feel frightened and upset; you feel that you are being attacked, and often it is hard to understand what is behind that fury.

You feel like you are walking on egg shells, afraid that one wrong move can make your partner irascible. That pattern of behavior destroys the foundation of your mutual trust and commitment.

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Eventually, the question becomes: how long can you live that

way? I can only speculate about the havoc Seal's volatility wreaked on he and Heidi's union, but I can tell you what I've learned over the years with my patients. The first thing to do is to put checks and balances in place so that you feel you can gain some control. Wait until the anger has dissipated so you can have a calm conversation. At that time, when things are more peaceful, suggest to your spouse that you put all of his or her complaints into a box, and then you can pull them out one by one and talk about them in a rational way. Even more important, though, would be to talk to your spouse about getting outside help. This can be daunting, but necessary, because without that help you might skip from talking about getting support to learning how to handle conflict in a constructive way to talking instead about getting out of the marriage completely.

It is when your spouse refuses to seek help, or when he or she will get the help, but then flat out refuses to change, that you might reach the point of having to decide to take yourself out of the danger zone, as Heidi has done. All the renewed vows in the world won't fix that, but hopefully, with help, you can.

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