

3 Times in Your Relationship When It's Better to Be Safe Than Sorry



By Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.

Zac Efron's well-publicized condom drop on the red carpet sparked Matt Lauer to comment, "Better to be safe than sorry, right?" Zac chuckled, "That's a great message to add to the many messages in the film."

Well, it turns out that "better to be safe than sorry" is a great message that applies not just to condoms, but also to relationships in general. Here are three times when it really IS better to be safe than sorry:

1. You suspect that your partner is cheating.

Barring a traumatic past relationship, people want to trust their partners. So if you keep having that nagging feeling that he's cheating, it's better to look into the possibility than to turn a blind eye. Hopefully, your worry is unfounded. But, unfortunately, each of my friends who suspected her partner was cheating really did have something to worry about. Consider the words of Ronald Reagan when discussing his relationship with the Soviet Union: "Trust. But verify."

Related: [You've Cheated, So Now What?](#)

2. You see a mean streak in your partner . . . but only with the guys.

No matter how nice your partner is to you right now, his true colors will shine through eventually. If you see him losing it on some guy at the bar, you can bet that given enough time, you'll be on the receiving end of the dude gone postal. And don't think that his gallant desire to protect the "weaker" sex will prevent an eventual outburst: a large majority of women who suffer from domestic violence were hit the first time while they were pregnant. Don't mess with a nasty temper. It will always come back to haunt you.

Related: [Hollywood Portrayals of Domestic Violence](#)

3. You get cold feet before the wedding.

Stories of commitment phobes and runaway brides who left their partners at the altar abound. It is often assumed that "cold feet" before a wedding is normal. While it may be common, anxiety before marriage is nothing to sweep under the rug—it's a manifestation that something isn't right about the relationship. Maybe it really is as simple as a commitment problem, and you need to get some tips from a professional about how to manage your impulse to run. But it's something that has to be worked out before the wedding, not afterwards.

Just remember, an embarrassing day is much better than a life of misery or a divorce down the road.

Most of the time, it's best to give your partner the benefit of the doubt. But when you encounter a cheating heart, a bad temper, or feelings of anxiety, it's better to be safe than sorry.

Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D. is a faculty associate at Arizona State University, where she teaches Communication and English classes. She is the publisher of Sourced Media Books and co-author of Hope After Divorce and Full Bloom: Cultivating Success. Amy and her husband, Jeff, have five children and look forward to welcoming baby #6 in April 2012. For more information about Amy, please visit amyosmondcook.com.