

Is Your Career Killing Your Relationship?



By Relationship & Sex Talk, Jane Greer, Ph.D., for GalTime.com

is your career your first love?

Russell Crowe and his wife of nine years, Danielle Spencer, have separated, according to Australian news sources. The two were on opposite sides of the globe when the news broke, she in Australia shooting *Dancing With The Stars*, and he in Los Angeles shooting the film *Noah*.

Like many other split couples with big careers, extensive travel schedules and calendars packed with commitments, could their whereabouts be an indication of what went wrong with their marriage? Did their careers take priority over their love lives?

Have you ever asked yourself this question: Which comes first

my love life or my career?

Most of the time, there's no easy answer. For celebrities, the choice can be particularly hard since their work often takes them far away for long periods of time. But you don't have to be a star to grapple with this tug-of-war. At some point, if you have a career, you will be forced to make tough decisions when your job and your relationship collide. While having a career should not preclude being in a relationship, the questions often become: How much is too much? And how much of a toll does it take?

If you're the one left alone on a Saturday night (as one of my patients was when her boyfriend couldn't make it to her sister's wedding because he had to work) what is important to keep in mind is to not take your partner's working overtime personally. It is easy to fall into the pattern of feeling they are choosing the office over you, while they may just see it as their professional responsibility. If this is going on for you or the person you're seeing, what you can do is look to put some checks and balances in place. If it's the sixth night in a row that you haven't been home before midnight, it may be time to have a talk with the boss and set some boundaries.

The other thing you can do if you know you are going to be overwhelmed with work and anticipate being exhausted is to give your partner fair warning. That way, they can make other plans and not feel ignored or abandoned.

You want to preserve the emotional intimacy you share with your partner because that can ultimately help sustain you as you make your way in the world. If you work to balance it you can maintain your career and your love life, rather than ending the relationship as Russell and Danielle have done.