

Does Your Past Interfere with Your Present?



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

how past betrayals can hurt new relationships

Did Eva Longoria's recent breakup with Mark Sanchez have anything to do with the memories of Tony Parker's infidelity?

There didn't seem to be any indication that they were having trouble, but sometimes there is nothing to see because it is what's going on below the surface that can cause the problem. For many, it's hard to start over, especially if you've been betrayed in a previous relationship. All of the anger, suspicion, and fear come through and can affect your current romantic situation.

You don't have to be a celebrity to ask the question: is your past interfering with your present?

Sometimes all it takes is one betrayal in your love life to leave you so devastated and reeling that it becomes a challenge to trust future partners. If you have experienced deception, it is not unusual for your reaction to that to be unwittingly repeated with new people even if they have done nothing to deserve it.

Take my patient Hillary, for example. Her boyfriend had been cheated on by his previous girlfriend. He always wants to know where Hillary is, who she is talking to. She has no intention of hurting him or being with another guy, but his demands and constant questioning make her feel boxed in. The other day, when an old friend called, she didn't tell her boyfriend, not because she had anything to hide, but because she was afraid of how he would react. He found out later and blew up, saying she didn't tell him so how can he trust her? There was no actual problem, but he was creating one. His jealousy and accusations were perpetuating the very thing he was looking to avoid.

Try your best to take your partner at face value. If Hillary had been able to explain it was just an old college friend who had called, and her boyfriend had been able to listen and believe it, things would have been smoother.

Look at the consistency between what someone says and what they do. My patient wasn't making any moves to elude him, or attempt to be with someone else. If he hadn't been carrying over the fear from his last heartbreak, he would have been able to see that things were good between them.

And most important, focus on the present, not the past or what scary thing might happen in the future. That way, you can stay connected and work toward building your own, strong relationship.