

Britney Spears Did It: When Should You Call It Off?



By Jane Greer, PhD for GalTime.com

Pop superstar Britney Spears recently announced the end of her engagement to talent agent Jason Trawick. Trawick, who stepped down as Britney's manager when they started dating in 2009, proposed in December 2011. Reports suggest that Britney, 31, who has two sons with ex-husband Kevin Federline, decided to cut ties because Trawick, 41, is not interested in having more children. Whether this was the true reason they called it off or not, it's an opportunity for the rest of us to discuss when calling off an engagement is the right choice.

Getting engaged can sometimes be a challenge, but knowing when

it's a mistake and it's time to end it is even more difficult. While reaching that point is different for every couple, here are a few indicators that canceling, or at least postponing, the wedding might be in everyone's best interest.

The event is keeping you together more than the relationship. Is the event itself, and all the time and money that has gone into planning it, the reason you are moving forward even though you feel in your gut that this is not the right thing to do? Every time you think of taking that drastic step and breaking the engagement, do you picture the invitations and the cake that have already been ordered and tell yourself it will be okay? If that's the case, then it is a red flag that something isn't right. Or is everyone else telling you how lucky you are, but you just don't believe it? If, in your core, you feel that something essential is missing and constantly reassure yourself that it's not, that important.

Your "big issue" with each other keeps rearing its ugly head. Another red flag that you might not be ready is if there is a problem behavior that you hoped would disappear as your big day approached, but instead continues to cause difficulties. That could involve anything from alcohol and drugs, to an issue at work, to an ongoing drama with your future in-laws. If you find yourself constantly dealing with extreme anger and resentment, you might want to think about putting off that date and getting help before you say, "I do."

You have a sense of dread, doubt, guilt or obligation. If you have lots of doubts, and are dreading the day that should be so happy, what you want to do is focus on evaluating your relationship and your situation. Additional warning signs are if instead of feeling that your life is expanding and getting bigger and better, you instead feel like you're making a sacrifice and giving up too much of your freedom and what is valuable to you. Also, if your motivation for following through with the wedding plans is stemming from guilt: hurting

your fiancé, disappointing your parents, or upsetting your friends, you might want to reconsider.

You are moving forward for the kids. In Britney's case, it has been said that Trawick has developed a strong relationship with her kids over the years. He was quoted as saying he "adored" them. Sometimes thinking that sticking it out would be best for the kids keeps people together even if it isn't the best thing for the adults. In this instance, the person doing the breaking up can feel guilty about hurting and letting down the children. If Britney experienced this at all, it didn't hold her back.

You feel the old "I love you but I'm not IN LOVE with you." While you may love your partner, you may not be in love with them. This is the passion that helps you navigate and negotiate the many ups and downs of marriage, which you need in order to make it work. If it isn't there, trust your gut. Britney did that, you can, too.