

You Must Be At W.A.R. To Protect Your Relationship

The best way to be prepared for the difficult and unexpected turns of a relationship is by remembering to Wait, Avoid and Respect.

By Jermaine Anthony Hamwright

I've been in the military over ten years now, and by my third overseas trip I thought I knew it all. Going into a training maneuver I was extremely confident about the ins and outs, so confident in fact that I dove in headfirst without fully preparing for the situation at hand.

In this training exercise, each group was required to go into a house and clear it out. My men and I stood back and watched what other troops did, and we figured this was good enough for us. We felt we didn't need more specific instructions. We didn't need a detailed game plan. We were simply going to go inside, split up into groups, complete the task better than previous teams had done the job, and return outside to hear praise from our superiors. Piece of cake!

When the time came and we rushed into the house, we were surprised by what we encountered. Rubber bullets flew everywhere, and loud music blared into our ears. With these major distractions we could hardly think, let alone try to communicate with each other and organize ourselves into a plan of action.

The result was that we bumbled around, dazed and confused, hardly accomplishing anything. As the leader of the group I assumed these guys were going to listen to me as I instructed Team One to go through one door and Team Two to go through another. But nobody wanted to do anything I said; everyone was too angry and frustrated by the incessant rubber bullets and

blaring music to follow my lead. As a result I became so angry I stopped taking suggestions from my men, since my pride wouldn't let me.

In the end nobody listened to anyone else, no strategy materialized, and nothing was accomplished. We got stuck, we couldn't finish our task, and we failed the training mission. What's more, we got yelled at by our superiors because of our poor performance.

. Is About Being Prepared

I learned many valuable points from this experience, and this knowledge led me to develop a . analogy, which I'll explain in a moment. I learned that when I try to rush things instead of waiting on the Lord, trouble and even total chaos would ensue. In that training exercise we had a lot of action but no plan. Rushing in did not pay off.

I also learned that I was wrong in comparing myself and my group to previous groups.

As the men and I watched other teams, we thought, "Huh, this looks easy! We'll do much better than them." We failed in part because we relied on the actions of others instead of going through the training ourselves. We got lazy. So I learned that I must avoid looking into other people's "houses." What works for them doesn't necessarily work for me, and vice-versa.

The third point I learned is that in the thick of the situation when the bullets were flying and the music was unbearably loud, I failed to respect my fellow men, and they failed to respect me. Instead of working as a cohesive group, we yelled at each other. I saw that without respect, you have no communication.

. In Relationships

So how does this apply to relationships? The majority of us go through a “fantasy phase” at the start of a relationship where everything is going great and it feels as though we’re perfect for each other.

But over time, that fantasy transforms into reality and a . situation develops, much like the training I went through with rubber bullets and annoying music. In a relationship a . situation can be your first fight, your first disagreement, or the first time your partner does something you disapprove of. It could be your tenth fight or your twentieth disagreement. How are you going to handle this? Are you prepared?

As men and women we have the tendency to rush into making a quick decision without having a plan in place. We make these hasty decisions without consulting with God. Also, we rely too much on what others say, looking at their circumstances instead of analyzing our own situation and developing a plan that’s right for us. And when both sides find themselves utterly frustrated, nobody wants to listen anymore. Respect falls by the wayside. These sorts of things can doom a relationship.

The best way to be prepared for the difficult and unexpected turns of a relationship is by remembering the lessons of .:

W – Wait On The Lord

A – Avoid Looking Into Other People’s Houses

R – Respect Each Other In All Situations

W: Wait On The Lord

Entering into a relationship is a huge step, a big decision. The last thing you want to do is rush in. You need to take the time to prepare for whatever may lie ahead. I am reminded of the following Bible passage:

“But they that wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with

wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31, AKJV)

In your relationship, take your time. Check with God to see if you're on the right track. Don't make hasty decisions. Instead, prepare and train yourself for the road ahead. Pray to God and bring to Him whatever concerns you have. Listen carefully to the guidance God offers you.

A: Avoid Looking Into Other People's Houses

Somebody else might look like they've got an orderly house, but do they really? Down the road their house may become a shambles. Don't compare yourself and your situation with others. In truth, you don't know what they're going through, and they don't necessarily know what's best for you. Instead of making comparisons, work on strengthening what you have. If you do need guidance, though, don't hesitate to seek Godly counsel from a spiritual parent who is wise, experienced, and has your best interest in mind.

R: Respect Each Other In All Situations

Through the good and the bad in a relationship, keep that respect going strong. It's so important to respect each other's voices and opinions. Remember that respect is earned, not demanded. Treat each other fairly, and respect will follow. Instead of saying something you'll later regret, learn to think before you speak. Put yourself in the other person's shoes.

"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."
(James 1:19, NLT)

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