



Intolerable pressure: Sometimes therapy can help with the difficult process of splitting up

Breaking up the easy way

As we head into a new year, many relationships are hurtling towards breaking point. According to solicitors Coffin Mew & Clover, divorce applications peak in March as a result of the tribulations of the festive period. But what if you want out of your relationship yet can't make the break? **DEBORAH MILLER** had that problem and turned to Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) for help.

When I first read therapist Marilyn Devonish's guff on NLP, it sounded like New Age hocus-pocus. A bit hypnosis, a bit therapy, it's described as a process by which a subconscious mind is rewired to draw it towards things and people that are good for it and away from those that aren't. Apparently, no matter how old a relationship or how intense its effects, NLP can neutralise your feelings, leaving you free to move on painlessly.

For two-and-a-half gruelling years, I'd been locked in a damaging relationship with Mark, who'd declared his love but wouldn't settle down. My attempts to walk away had failed and my confidence, energy levels and concentration all suffered.

Unable to change him, I'd have to change me. And NLP

was worth a go. It started with a punishing round of cryptic, hard-to-answer questions such as: 'How do you know when you're attracted to someone?' ('Er, um, I dunno, I just feel it,') and 'When this relationship no longer exists, what will you be able to do that you can't do now?'

Devonish then asked me to list the things I want from a partner, but rattling off the usual 'trust' and 'loyalty' didn't cut it. She wanted specifics: 'How do you want to feel in the relationship? What event will signal to you that you're feeling like that?'

After three-and-a-half hours of this mind-mulching, she said: 'In the next few days, notice what you notice.'

Painful memories

Devonish had been playing with my subconscious, she later explained. 'After the first session, clients often feel as though their brains are crackling,' she said. 'They feel sleepy, euphoric, dream more intensely and remember long-forgotten things. Your subconscious is neutralising painful memories.'

In the weeks following my treatment, Mark barely registered a blip on my radar and, although my concentration was still a bit

haywire, people noticed a marked change in me. As if to put my new mindset to the test, a conciliatory bouquet arrived from Mark five weeks into our separation. The attached note suggested he had something new to lay on the table and asked me to dinner to 'talk'.

'Oh, no,' friends gasped. 'You're not going back with him again, are you?'

Normally, I'd have leapt at the offer, hoping for the best and returning home disappointed. Not this time, though – I was content, and made it clear I wouldn't have him back unless he made some hefty changes. He's been quiet ever since.

I still don't understand how the technique worked so quickly but it did – subtly, seamlessly and, best of all, with no conscious effort on my part. No longer agonising and obsessing over Mark, I'm ticking more items off my to-do list. My interests have turned to new projects and new people. So will I recognise Mr Right when I meet him? Probably not, but I know an id that will.

■ *TranceFormations, Marilyn Devonish, from £60 an hour, Tel: 01923 337282, e-mail: mdevonish@ntlworld.com www.tranceformationslimited.com*

thing going on.

Who wouldn't you go out with, if the survival of the species depended on it? Rik Waller.

Nightmare date: A guy with bad doing Bo Selectal impressions.

Serious relationships? Two.

■ *If you'd like a date with Zoe on Saturday night courtesy of toptable.co.uk, the free online res and party booking service, e-mail responses to the questions we ask her, with a photo and phone num to metrosexual@ukmetro.co.uk by 4pm tomorrow.*

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