

After the Wave: Do Not Rip Off the Band-Aid

When calm finally comes back, a lot of us immediately want closure. And if I am being very specific, we want the kind of closure where he admits what happened, understands exactly why it hurt, apologizes properly, and preferably agrees that our version was the correct one.

I get it. After a fight, there is something in you that wants to finish the story. You want the apology. You want the lesson learned. You want to know that the last three hours were not completely pointless.

Sometimes that conversation is necessary.

And sometimes you are about to rip open something that had finally started to heal just because you still want him to say, “Yes. You were right.”

Think about your child falling down and scraping a knee. You clean it, put a Band-Aid on it, and let it heal. The next day, when it finally starts closing, you do not think, “Perfect. Let me rip this thing off and open the wound again just to make sure it is really there.”

You leave it alone. You let the Band-Aid do its job.

Sometimes I think we need to do the exact same thing after a wave.



Calm is not an invitation to reopen the courtroom.

Just because things are calm again does not mean you have to go back through every sentence, every tone, every contradiction, and every ridiculous thing that was said in the middle of the fight.

Ask yourself two very simple questions:

♥ *Does this actually need to come back up because it affects money, parenting, safety, an important agreement, or a real boundary?*

♥ *Or do I mainly need him to admit that I was right?*

If something actually needs to be fixed, absolutely address it. But address the thing that needs fixing. Do not turn it into a three-hour postmortem of the entire fight.

And if there is honestly nothing useful waiting underneath that Band-Aid? Leave it alone. Let calm stay calm.



*Happiness
sometimes
means quiet.*



Calm Does Not Mean It Was Okay

This part matters because I do not want you confusing peace with pretending.

You can decide not to reopen a fight and still know that something was not okay. You can let the wave die and still keep your boundary. You can move on tonight and still bring up the one thing that actually matters tomorrow when everybody has a functioning brain again.

Not every problem needs a courtroom. But real problems still need a solution.

So no, I am not telling you to swallow everything, smile, and pretend nothing happened. I am telling you to stop confusing “I need to deal with this” with “I need him to admit every single thing I am right about.” Those are not the same thing.



Peace and boundaries can exist together.



Aftercare: Get Yourself Back

After a wave, you may feel almost hungover. Tired. Empty. Wired. Hyper alert. Maybe the house is finally quiet, but your body clearly did not get the memo. You are replaying the conversation in your head, waiting for the mood to flip again, and somehow still arguing with him even though he is not even in the room anymore.

This is the part where I want you to stop making the relationship the only thing in the room.

You do not need some beautiful ten-step nervous-system ritual. You need to get yourself back into your own body and your own life.



Eat something.

Not because food magically fixes a fight. Because everything feels worse when you are exhausted and running on coffee.



Drink water.

Yes, boring. Do it anyway.



Move your body.

Walk. Work out. Stretch. Clean something. Get the adrenaline somewhere other than your brain.



Take the shower. Or the bath.

Wash the whole stupid evening off you.



Talk to one safe person if you need to.
Not twenty people. Not a jury. One
person who brings you back to reality.



Do something completely ordinary.
Work. Play with your kids. Fold laundry.
Watch something stupid. Answer emails.
Go back to being a person with an entire life.



And sleep. Seriously. You do not
need to solve your entire
relationship at 1:30 in the morning
just because your brain has
suddenly decided tonight is the
perfect time.

The fight happened. It does not get
the rest of your day too.



Use a Little Humor

Once you understand the pattern, please allow yourself a little private humor. Not mocking him. Not laughing in his face in the middle of a fight. I am talking about that tiny moment in your own head where you think, “Oh my God. Okay. Apparently this is today’s huge crisis.”

Humor gives you a little distance. And distance is useful because it stops every single mood, comment, and reaction from going straight into your chest like it is a personal attack on your entire existence.

Sometimes the healthiest thing you can do is realize how completely ridiculous the situation became.

Again, keep that joke in your own head. We are trying to lower the wave, not add gasoline because you decided this was the perfect moment for stand-up comedy.



The Final Rule

After the wave, do not make the entire rest of your day about the wave.

You patched what you could. You got through it. The house is calm. Now go back to your life.

Your work. Your kids. Your body. Your friends. Your hobbies. Your goals. Your show. Your book. Your dinner. Whatever reminds you that you are a whole person and this relationship is one part of your life, not the entire damn thing.

And if the issue truly needs another conversation, have it later. Calmly. Specifically. About the actual thing that matters.

If it does not? Let it die.



Patch the wave. Recover. Then go back to being you.

That is the part I do not want you to skip. Because if every wave gets two hours of conflict and then another six hours of replaying, analyzing, explaining, recovering, and waiting for the next one, the wave is still stealing your whole life even after it is over.



*Do not give it
that much real
estate.*

