FEAR FACTOR

Psychologist TARNYA DAVIS talks about dealing with loneliness in a relationship.

SOMETIMES the idea of being alone can be so frightening that it keeps people in relationships for longer than is healthy for them or their partner.

The right relationship isn't one where there are no problems, but it may be one where you feel less lonely.

We hold the ideal as a long and enduring relationship but perhaps sometimes we can start to consider that this may not be the ideal goal. Just as resilience is sometimes about stopping trying, so too a healthy outcome can be leaving a relationship that shows no sign of becoming healthier.

The School of Life have some useful ideas about our fear of being alone and the cost of that in keeping ourselves in unhealthy relationships. It may be worth considering that rather than being fearful of being lonely if you leave, that perhaps you are already alone. It could also be that the suffering of being alone might be far easier than the suffering of a difficult relationship and that perhaps the only way to end the feeling of being alone might involve being alone for a period in order to start to feel connected again.

It may also be worse to be privately disconnected and lonely than publicly alone, particularly when it comes to gaining access to support. Sometimes it can be that we feel we don't deserve to be in a more sustaining relationship.

It's also useful to remind ourselves we only have one life which can put some perspective upon waiting and waiting for things to change. School of Life tells us, "The only thing that truly deserves our terror is the prospect of life without a connection to someone we can admire and adore".