

Face On – dealing with the difficult sides of a relationship

Part of what makes relationships good is the hardships you'll face, writes Vinko Anthony.

Okay, you're probably thinking, "You're not really selling us on this relationship concept." Why would you purchase a car if the salesperson told you that it doesn't start some days? Why would you purchase a home when the current owner tells you, "Yeah... the roof leaks!" Hear us out, though.

Relationships are real life. They're between two people, and we all know that people aren't perfect. However, this isn't a reason to avoid relationships – just like the discomfort of exercise isn't a reason to not pick up the dumbbells or not go on a run. Conflict, or pressure, is a reason to appreciate your partner. It's a reason to fight for something, and work to better yourself and your partner every day – just like lifting heavy weights will make you stronger.

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Often, gay media and social media show us beautiful people with ideal bodies and lives. What we often don't see is the hard times – like the difficult workout sessions – but in a relationship, that comes with the territory. There will be hard times, whether that's something external or between the two people in a relationship. Instead of avoiding them, we face them. We face them because we know our love is worth fighting for.

The same can be said about nearly everything that takes time and effort. Getting fit, for example, requires discomfort. It requires days in the gym or on the treadmill even though you'd rather be sitting on the couch. If it was easy to be fit, though, everyone would be fit. Relationships, like a healthy body



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and lifestyle, require time and effort.

Of course, there is a balance. While you don't want to shy away from a relationship just because it gets difficult, you also don't want to stick with someone if they're abusive or don't treat you the way you deserve. If you're working out and feel a muscle tear or a pain that's more than just muscles working hard, your body will tell you that it's time to stop. Not all pain is good, after all. It's up to you to determine when something – whether that's a relationship or a weight you're trying to lift – is worth the fight. You need to know when something is merely an inconvenience or if it's a dealbreaker.

View difficulty not as something you should eradicate but something to deal with. Problems in a relationship can help you learn about each other, just like long distance running will help your body adapt to working hard, making you a better runner. A disagreement can lead to better understanding between you and your partner. A miscommunication can lead to a change in behaviour that allows you to grow as a couple. It's just like how lifting weights causes tiny microtears in your muscles that will grow back even bigger, making you stronger.

You may think that hooking up means you won't have to deal with any conflict or difficulty. But this doesn't go away just because the relationship is shorter-term. There's still going to be confusion, or things that annoy you, or disagreements. In a short-term relationship,

like a one-night stand, you won't be as equipped to deal with conflict that comes your way, just like doing one bench press won't give you pecs the next day. A long-term, consistent relationship allows for you to adapt and grow with conflict – which is not something you'll get in a one-off, one-night stand.

While partnering with a matchmaker won't help you face the difficult parts of a relationship, they can help you lay the groundwork to face your problems head-on. Don't be afraid of something just because it's heavy or might cause some momentary discomfort. Know that a solid relationship won't be devoid of tough times – but it will make the tough times worth it.

Vinko and his partner, Andrea.



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