



## WHEN IT'S TIME FOR AN INTERVENTION

BY DR. DAVID HAWKINS

You're sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. The emotional stress is taking its toll on your mind, your spiritual faith and now even your body. We shouldn't be surprised that our bodies and mind record the toll of ongoing emotional and relational stress.

"I have stomach problems and headaches all the time," Lisa said recently, sitting across from her husband, Les who stared blankly at her.

They had flown across the country to work with me at The Marriage Recovery Center. Both were in significant pain, bristling at nearly every word the other said. Both were feeling discouraged, having tried fits and spurts of marriage counseling, without notable success.

"We're both so raw," Les said. "I don't think I can say anything without hurting her feelings. She's touchy, irritable and annoyed."

Lisa glared at Les, obviously hurt by his words.

"It's not *anything* you say," she said emphatically, clearly upset. "It's how you say it. You're angry all the time. I can't seem to do or say anything without upsetting you. Everything you say has a bite to it."

Her words didn't sit well with him. She could see that he was getting more upset, trying as hard as she could to keep the peace.

After sitting in silence for a few minutes Les erupted.

“Do you see what I mean?” he shouted. “Can you see the way she talks to me? I can’t get any respect and I’m tired of it. She is constantly talking down to me and disrespecting me.”

Lisa began to cry, lowering her head and grabbing her face.

I had sat with Les and Lisa for several hours at this point, and this seemed to be their dance. Both shared their hurt in ways that hurt the other. Both spoke to the other in accusations and a bite that provoked the other.

And so it went. I worked with Les and Lisa for several more hours, but with little change. Their patterns were ingrained. Accuse, attack, defend. Accuse, attack, defend. They had no boundaries that would create safety. They seemed unable to shift into a healthier pattern.

*Now was the time for an intervention.*

We have a saying at The Marriage Recovery Center: *We have co-created our problems and have co-dependently enabled these problems to continue and must now co-labor to remedy them.*

I repeated this saying to Les and Lisa. I walked them through each part of it slowly and carefully. I offered them feedback on how I saw them blame, shame, accuse, provoke, hurt and ultimately either blow up or withdraw. I noted how it was time for an intervention—a time when they make a decision to radically change how they related to each other.

Let’s consider the process of *intervention*.

First, *you must recognize your need for radical change*. Most people settle for a little bit of change. They seek a little bit of counseling, read a few books and make minor changes, discouraged in the meager results. They tell themselves that their problems are not as big as they really are. Are you ready for radical change?

Second, *you must identify what needs to be changed*. It is common to point the finger of blame externally, suggesting you play no part in the destructive process. As long as you continue to engage in blaming, shaming, blame-shifting, accusing and provoking, it makes it very hard for the relationship to improve. It's time to accurately name the problems and prepare for an intervention—radical change.

Third, *you must acknowledge ways you both enable the destructive process to continue*. As long as you complain about the problems but don't seek radical intervention, you enable the process to continue unchanged. Complaining, arguing, blaming and attacking are useless and even destructive processes. You must take ownership of your part in the problem.

Fourth, *you will need help to significantly change a destructive process*. Just as we seek health professionals when our symptoms reach a tipping point, so too we need mental health professionals to assist us in changing a destructive dance. We need help in creating an *intervention* whereby we will not continue destructive processes that we cannot see. We need a capable professional who will name the problem, help us identify it and isolate it, and then create an effective treatment plan to change it.

Finally, *you must be held accountable for change*. It is in our nature to slip back into old ways of functioning. Just as surely as I need weekly piano lessons to keep me on a track of growth and improvement, you need someone who will point out when you are slipping back into old, destructive patterns. You need someone who will speak truth into your life. The person (Psychologist/ Marriage Counselor/ Pastor) will have time and fortitude to “call you out” when they see the destructive patterns. Owning those patterns and their destructive impact, with God's help you can change them.

We are here to help and offer Phone/ Skype counseling on issues related to this article. Please go to our website, [www.marriagerecoverycenter.com](http://www.marriagerecoverycenter.com) and discover more information about this as well as the free downloadable eBook, *A Love Life of Your Dreams*, including other free videos and articles.