

Commitment

March 2014 Newsletter



I now pronounce you...

These are well-known words. They usually close a wedding ceremony—when two people vow to love and honor “from this day forward.”

But many people fear commitment

It’s called being “commitment-phobic.” We usually associate this fear with people who keep avoiding marriage or other long-term relationships. But it can include many other decisions too.

It’s natural for people to shy away from committing when they’re truly not ready or don’t feel they’re making the right choice. But even when a choice does feel right, some people still tend to act on a deep-seated fear of committing to a relationship, job, budget, exercise plan, diet and more.

What’s behind the fear?

When people are afraid to commit, some of the reasons can include:

- **Fear of making the wrong decision.** Doubt can trap people and keep them from doing anything.
- **Fear of risk and change.** Many fear the unknown. The fear can be so strong, some would rather stay in an unhappy spot than try something new and different.
- **Perfectionism.** Being a perfectionist causes worry and anxiety. It also leads to procrastination — one of the major roadblocks to commitment.
- **The lure of “what’s next.”** Some people don’t want to commit because they always think something better is just around the corner.

- **Fear of rejection.** People may avoid commitment because they’re afraid to fail or be rejected. This can relate to low self-esteem.

How to get over the fear of commitment

Like most fears, this one can be beaten. **The first step:** recognizing you have it. **The second:** wanting to change. And finally: doing the work.

Does that sound like a big commitment? Take it in steps. Try to:

- **Learn to cope with doubt.** Think back to decisions you’ve made in the past. How often were you 100 percent certain? How often did you take a chance? When you move past fear of commitment, you can usually make sound decisions by listening to your head and your gut.
- **Realize there is no “perfect.”** Waiting for the perfect choice can take forever. There are always pros and cons. Work on knowing when something is “good enough.”
- **Accept that risk and change are part of life.** Two critical life skills are adaptability and resilience. This means developing confidence that you can cope with whatever happens. It comes from experience and practice.
- **Work on your self-esteem.** Learn ways to boost your belief in your own value. Then the fear of failure or rejection won’t be so scary.

For more help and information

Fear of commitment can be complicated. This article touches on just some basics. If you think you may have some degree of this fear, consider reading a self-help book or reaching out for counseling.