

## Letter to a DID Couple

by Diane Hawkins

---

Dear,

I am sorry to hear of the conflicts going on between you and your spouse. I know you are both under a lot of stress at this time, which makes interpersonal dynamics more strained and reactive than normal.

I want to affirm that you both have legitimate issues and you both deserve to be heard by the other. I really believe that it is the heart of both of you to hear each other and to be sensitive to each other's needs. Unfortunately, in times of stress this doesn't always happen, especially as your protectors are always poised to make sure that you are treated fairly by the other.

I urge you both to try to differentiate between what is coming from your hearts and what is coming from your protectors. Your protectors mean very well, but they don't represent your true hearts. They are only interested in protecting your unhealed wounds from further pain. *Your marriage relationship needs to depend on the interaction of your hearts, not your protectors.* I urge you to try to remember this when being confronted by the other's protectors, who will often say careless and combative things that are purely protective in nature and not coming from the heart. I do not say this to excuse them or to encourage them that they can say what they want. I want them to learn to evaluate when they are truly in danger and to try to respect and understand the needs of the other person too. That is my message to them while my message to you as the true wife and the true husband is always to differentiate what the other person's protectors are saying and doing from what you know of your partner's true heart. You may not be able to do that in the heat of the moment, but if you can remember that as soon as possible afterward, I believe that it will help minimize the damage to your marriage.

You also both need to realize that the other person has wounded parts inside. If these wounded parts are not affirmed, the protectors will come out. Then things get unpleasant. So, when protectors come out, at some point (at least after your own protectors subside) try to recognize that the protector in the other person came out most likely because the issue of a wounded part inside was hit and activated. So you need to try to understand not only the role of the protector but recognize that a part inside your spouse is hurting and not getting something that it needs. Now, it is not the obligation of you each to meet all the needs of the other's wounded parts, but it is good to try at least to be aware of the wounded parts in your spouse and try to treat them the way that you

want your spouse to treat your own wounded parts, giving them the attention that you can when you are able. The primary responsibility on each of you is to recognize what your own wounded parts need in a given situation and try to find a suitable means to meet that need. Otherwise, the possibility of protectors coming out increases. By the same token, when one of you comes to the other with the needs of one of your wounded parts, try to treat this with respect and some kind of affirmation, even if you have to put off taking the time to meet the need right then.

Working with this kind of understanding of each other will hopefully diminish the sparks flying between you and the potential lasting harm from them.

You also need to recognize that your wounded parts are really YOU, carrying your unresolved hurts. So, I am glad that you are reaching out to get help for yourselves too.

Blessings and prayers for you both!

Diane