

What makes a person not agree to Therapy with their partner and/or a prospective client disappear after their initial email to me?

I can only make some guesses of course, but I know from years of face to face working that the following scenarios may be at play;

- One partner contacts me without telling their partner and when they do tell them, their partner refuses to engage with therapy. This could be because the two people have different agendas, i.e. one partner wants to take action to sort matters out and the other wants to keep burying their head in the sand. The last thing they want is to have everything out in the open. They may promise (again) to do better but this has not come to fruition previously – so why would it be any different now?
- The partner labelled as having ‘the problem’ by their partner, is afraid of what the therapist will say to them i.e. afraid of taking the ‘blame’ by the therapist. The therapist is always neutral, not seeking to ‘blame’ anybody, rather seeking to help the partners ‘understand’ what is going on between them, why they haven’t been able to sort it out.
- The partner has closely guarded information that has not been disclosed to their partner previously e.g. that she does not have a good time when they have sex. Perhaps the woman has never had an orgasm. They may be too shy to tell or show each other what they would like in bed, (they may not know what they would like and can’t communicate). They don’t want to hurt their partner and the gulf becomes even wider in their relationship. Being afraid of shaking the status quo up will not lead to progress, only more time shall pass and the same old resentments will continue to boil and the relationship is going to continue to be in trouble.
- One partner persuades the other that they don’t need a therapist as they will sort it out themselves. If that is so easy....why haven’t they sorted it already – it’s easy right?
- The couple have turned into Mummy and Daddy. They are devoted to their children and to avoid arguments they don’t challenge the status quo. Although most people would think that it’s admirable to be devoted to your children, loss of all identification as a romantic couple or a sexual individual is not helpful. When mum and dad don’t touch each other for a cuddle or never have alone time and never argue, children are not being shown a good example of how couples successfully interact (particularly how to handle negative emotions and solve problems). When they grow up and have relationships of their own, they will have a model of no communication or

resolution of problems and no space to be an individual away from parenthood, with no need to have time spent alone with their partner. What seems to affect females more than males is when they have their own children. Somehow becoming a mum can mean no sex, as sex is not a good thing and mums that are good don't have sex. Yes they do and they enjoy it



- One partner may be having an affair or a series of one-night stands and is afraid that this will be uncovered in therapy. The infidelity usually emerges anyway, so again not engaging in therapy is not going to help at all.
- Sometimes very basic things stop people having therapy e.g. what will the therapist think of me? I can answer that very easily, a good therapist will always be thinking 'how can I help this person or couple'. A therapist is not going to judge you or criticise – they want to help you work it out, move forward together in a positive way.
- The most outstanding cause of difficulties in relationships (not just the sexual side of things), is poor communication. Couples rarely talk about their 'expectations' e.g. we have a great sexual relationship now, but what do we both expect it to be like (as individuals), after we have children? What do we both expect to happen if a serious problem occurs between us? It would be hard to say, 'I'm going to bury my head in the sand and do everything I can to convince you there is nothing to talk about and the other one is not going to say, 'I will be on your case every day until you give in with this. Clear effective communication is needed and it can transform relationships. Don't expect that everybody will be able to automatically do this.

Relationship Therapy & Psychosexual Therapy helps couples to have difficult conversations. It is the job of the Therapist to make sure this happens.