

Should I Stay or Go? A Clarity Sheet

You have made the decision four times this month and it has not held once. On Tuesday leaving was obvious. By Thursday you could not remember what Tuesday had been about. In between you wrote two lists of pros and cons, and both agreed with whatever you already felt when you picked up the pen. This sheet does not answer the question, and it is worth saying that at the top rather than burying it at the bottom: nothing you fill in below produces a verdict.

Who this is for: You have been going round this for months, you have asked four friends and had four answers, and you can now argue both sides so well that neither one convinces you.

The six sections

What is true now, and what you are hoping becomes true

Two columns, and everything goes in one of them.

True now: what this relationship is actually like this month:

Hoping: what I am waiting for or expecting to change:

Which column is longer, and by how much?

How long has the right column looked like this?

The last year, not the next one

Evidence about change, taken from behind rather than in front.

What is different about this relationship compared with a year ago?

What produced that change, and did it hold?

What is exactly the same as it was a year ago?

What was I saying a year ago that I am still saying?

Somebody else's exact facts

The advice you would give if the facts were not yours.

The situation in the third person, in five lines:

What I would say to a friend who told me that:

What I left out of the third-person version:

Why is my own answer different from the one I just gave?

What you are actually choosing between

The options that exist, rather than the ones you are comparing.

Option A, staying with things as they are, for another year:

Option B, a specific change someone has agreed to attempt:

Option C, ending it:

Which two have I actually been comparing?

The timing question

Whether you are in a state to decide this at all.

How long since the last incident, good or bad?

What state am I in today: braced, flat, calm, numb?

Would I have written these answers on Tuesday?

What would I want to know before trusting today's version?

What would have to be true, and by when

A review date, which is not the same as a decision.

Two observable things I will look at when I review this:

The date I will look:

What I will do differently between now and then:

This worksheet is free to print, photocopy and share, including with clients. It is self-reflection material, not a diagnosis, an assessment or a substitute for professional support. If a relationship involves fear, control or coercion, or if working through this raises more than feels manageable, please speak to a doctor, a therapist or a domestic abuse service.