

Are Separate Vacations a Sign of an Ailing Marriage?

Does absence make the heart grow fonder... or colder?

[SHARE](#)

Post published by [J. R. Bruns M.D.](#) on Mar 09, 2015 in [Repairing Relationships](#)

• [TWEET](#)

• [SHARE](#)

• [EMAIL](#)



President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle raised eyebrows when they took separate vacations for St. Valentine's weekend, the most romantic holiday of the year, when most couples traditionally exchange cards and husbands personally present their wives with gifts like red roses or candy.

Instead of going out together for a candlelight dinner, President Obama flew on Air Force One 3000 miles to California, where he played three rounds of golf at a private golf course owned by Oracle executive chairman Larry Ellison. Meanwhile, the First Lady and daughters Sasha and Malia went skiing for the weekend at the famous Rocky Mountains resort town of Aspen, Colorado.

idea. It all depends on it depends on the state of your [marriage \(/basics/marriage\)](#) or cohabitation.

According to relationship expert April Masini, separate vacations are a bad idea in an ailing marriage. "Don't mistake separate vacations in a healthy relationship for taking a break in a relationship riddled with trouble," Masini observed. "If you 'take a break' from a relationship, then that is when you should expect each other to behave as if you're both single." Many television viewers remember the infamous "Friends" episode, when Ross "took a break" from his troubled relationship with his lover Rachel and cheated on her. If your partner has the character flaw of the wandering eye and can't be expected to remain true, then it is indeed a bad idea for them to "take a break" by traveling by themselves or vacationing in an exotic locale with friends of dubious character.

Writer D.A. Wolf, recounting her own failed marriage that featured her husband going on separate

vacations for years, realized that "our separateness extended into most activities and areas of our lives. Solo vacations were symptomatic of dramatically divergent values, [goals \(/basics/motivation\)](#), and expectations of marriage." If, like D.A. Wolf, your own relationship was based on the specious values of physical attraction and [charm \(/basics/charisma\)](#), then you will see the honeymoon fade as your partner begins to realize the terrible cost of a committed relationship or marriage. Denying their legitimate needs, feelings and [dreams \(/basics/dreaming\)](#) to please a mate is not initially burdensome. But in the long run, the strain of keeping up the charade of living with someone of few common interests, differing values and clashing temperaments will take its toll. Physical intimacy will lose its pain-killing potency as the relational differences come creeping out from beyond the shadows into the light of day.

The day to day grind of playing a role that isn't genuine will leave a partner feeling weary, oppressed and resentful. But many disillusioned spouses will be careful not to alienate their husband or wife through a tidal wave of pent-up rage. They instead may create a long term strategy allowing them to function in the relationship without destroying it after the thrill of the honeymoon fades. They will negotiate areas and times when they can get away and safely express small fragments of their real selves without threatening the union. Separate vacations are the perfect way for a resentful spouse to get away and blow off steam without revealing the real reason for their never ending well of sarcasm and bickering. A marriage can function for years or even decades using separate vacations to vent [anger \(/basics/anger\)](#). But as D.A. Wolf can attest, it can be a warning sign of a relationship in distress.

So can we really conclude anything about President Obama and the First Lady Michelle taking separate vacations? Only they know if their relationship is healthy or not. Until the history books are written after the Obama Administration ends on January 20, 2017, we can only hope they have a strong relationship and their separate vacations do leave them longing for each other.



1

[Comment](#)