

SPLITSVILLE!

VALERIE BERTINELLI is no longer taking it One Day at a Time with husband Eddie Van Halen.

Sources say the rocker's heavy use of drugs and alcohol has finally taken its toll and ended one of Hollywood's most solid and enduring marriages after 21 years.

"Eddie and Valerie were once incredibly in love," a friend close to the couple tells GLOBE.

"But his heavy boozing created a gap so wide in their marriage that nothing could repair it.

"Valerie stayed with Eddie through all his drunken years. And even though he finally got sober, it was too late - she was already emotionally worn out by that time."

The 42-year-old former sitcom cutie met guitarist Van Halen, 47, in 1980, and they tied the knot the following year. They have one child, son Wolf, 11.

But the musician's continuing battle with the bottle was a constant source of conflict.

"Ed's got a problem I'm not happy with," Valerie admitted in a 1990 interview, just after her hubby had checked into a drug and alcohol rehab program.

"Ed doesn't beat me, he hurts himself. And I love him. That's my weakness. I feel more sorry for Ed than I do myself.

"If worse comes to worse, I can always pick up and leave. But he's still stuck with his problem."

Van Halen was in and out of rehab during the early '90s. At a 1995 concert, he told the crowd, "I'm sober and I'm alive.

"I've fallen on and off the wagon, tried all the programs. My wife couldn't have been more supportive."

The actress, who joined the hit CBS drama *Touched By an Angel* last year, even stood by her man as he was diagnosed with mouth cancer and had a malignant tumor removed from his tongue in 1999, the same year he had hip replacement surgery.

But his wife's patience and love finally reached its limit and she secretly moved out 10 months ago.

"Valerie stuck by Eddie for a very long time," notes L.A.



WHY VAN HALEN & VALERIE PACKED IT IN - AFTER 21 YEARS

relationship expert Dr. Ava Cadell.

"So for her to leave him after 21 years, she must have been extremely unhappy. Once an addict becomes sober, other problems usually crop up."

Valerie and Wolf now live in a \$2 million home near Van Halen's Hollywood Hills estate.

She and her son plan to stay there for most of the summer, until

she goes back to work on *Touched By an Angel*, which films in Utah.

Valerie's co-stars have rallied around her and she's constantly on the phone with fellow angels John Dye and Della Reese.

"She has some great support," confides a pal.

"It's a difficult period for her, but I'm sure she'll get through it."

- ROBIN MIZRAHI