

Little Steps to a Successful Loving Relationship

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Relationships are never always easy. It is normal to hit some bumps in the road or to even have long stretches where you and your partner have a hard time connecting. Couples who are lucky enough to seem to get along more often than not have probably discovered a little secret early on in their marriage. That secret is to show love and affection in little ways often- not always in big ways when things seem to be going badly or when an apology is in order!

Imagine stopping on the way home from work and picking wildflowers from alongside the road for your spouse. They may have had a difficult day on the job or you both simply seem to have lost your intimacy lately. If you were to walk in the door with a fist full of wildflowers you took the time to select just for them on the way home; you will have broken the surrounding atmosphere with love and consideration. You both have the opportunity to start fresh with that one, small yet powerful gesture.

If you are going out of town or simply feel like 'ships passing in the night' because of kids, commitments or work, find a sun catcher, charm or porcelain figure in the shape of a star or a shooting star. Wrap the trinket in a small gift box and fold a note on top of it that says, "Wish you were here" and place it in his or her travel bag or even in a briefcase or purse. When he or she finds it and knows that you are missing them and thought enough to share that sentiment, it will stir emotions that may not have been awakened in some time.

In order to change tedious or tired routines or to inspire intimacy, you might be surprised at how little effort is required. Tape a note on the television that says, "Wouldn't you rather turn me on?" instead. If he or she is enjoying a good book, remove the bookmark and replace it with a note that says, "I bet you'll never guess where I've hidden your bookmark."

Remember the small things you used to do when you first got together that would make your heart flutter and put a twinkle in your eye? Do them again! When you

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go shopping, for a walk or you're just sitting together watching TV, hold hands, link arms or put your arm around her. Softly whisper "Hey" into his or her ear and gaze lovingly into each other's eyes. If he or she wants to know what you are doing, simply say that you are amazed at how much you love them.

These simple, small acts can really go far when it comes to sparking a little romance in your marriage. They can break the monotony of a relationship or help your partner to feel appreciated and loved. You can expect to feel the same in return!

There are hundreds of things you can do to better your relationship. To help get you headed in the right direction, here are some ways to build, strengthen, and enhance your relationship.

Remember, little steps taken every day will add up to big successes.

Start Over

When couples first get together, everything is new and exciting. They overlook the little annoying things the other person does. However, after time, the nagging starts, instead of hearing, "You look beautiful," they might hear "Why are you wearing that shirt?" If this sounds like your relationship, first, the two of you need to sit down and be honest that things have changed. Identify the things each other did in the beginning of the relationship that created the attraction in the first place. Then together, make a commitment to start over. The truth is, both of you will have to work on this. It will not automatically be easy but it is possible. Start by forgiving each other, forgetting the past, and then start over with the flirtation. Focus only on the special things your mate does and relearn to put the unimportant things aside. It will take some time so be patient.

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Schedule Time

Spending quality time together is crucial. This time can be with friends, dining out, attending a sporting event, or cuddling together while watching a favorite movie. The activity is not what is important but the fact that you are together, doing something that you both enjoy. People have extremely busy schedules and between work, family, the home, errands, and everything else going on, finding time for your mate can be difficult. Just as you would schedule a meeting on your calendar, show some courtesy in the relationship by scheduling time with each other. Once the plan is in place, no backing out unless you have some life and death emergency.

Needed Space

As important as it is to spend quality time together, it is equally important to give each other time to do something they like. If your mate loves to fish but you have no desire to bait a hook with little, slimy worms, or if you like to go to the casino but your mate would rather do something different, encourage each other to take time apart. Try establishing a set time for this very purpose, if possible. For example, perhaps you could determine that every other Friday night is “singles” night. This is not a time to date other people, but to enjoy preferred activities. Remember that you have to place trust in your relationship. If you try this and then drill them, to see what they did, whom they were with, and where they went, then the exercise has failed.

No Debates

If you know that you and your mate have proven differences in opinion on certain subjects, avoid those subjects. As an example, if you are a Republican and your mate is a Democrat, politics should probably be avoided. As the two of you

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identify new topics that could cause a debate session, stop the conversation before it even gets started.

Filler Talk

If you are married, especially with children, break out of the habit of talking about nothing. Many times, families will be sitting around the dinner table and the conversation consists of, “Do you like your carrots?”, or “I wonder what is on TV tonight?” Instead, change your strategy to include real questions, showing real interest. Replace the normal, “Did you have a good day at work?” with “Tell me what you did at work today.” Even if you do not understand everything being said, listen with interest. It is not that you are so much interested in the work, but your mate’s life.

Lighten Up

Often when couples have gone through or are going through some bumpy spots in their relationship, things tend to get serious. It could be that there is a tremendous amount of tension or perhaps they are not sure what to say. Regardless of the reason, learn to lighten up. Do not take every comment, glance, or movement as a serious problem. If your mate makes a mistake, which you both will, let it go, or if appropriate, laugh about it. If you make a mistake, do not be afraid to poke fun at yourself. This will automatically start the process of tension breaking.

Communicate

When couples are having problems in a relationship, communication is the first thing to stop. It is often easier to just be quiet than to get mad. When rebuilding relationships, just as communication was the first to stop, it now needs to be the

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first to start. This will require that both individuals let down their guard and pretty much throw caution to the wind. Healing in the relationship cannot start until you talk. Make an agreement that you will talk about anything and everything and that you will listen, really listen. That does not mean that you will agree with everything, which is perfectly fine. However, if you do not agree, do not yell, rather, the two of you need to calmly discuss the issue and together, work out a solution. This is hard work but within a very short time, you will both feel much better, individually and as a couple.

A Night of Passion

Intimacy and passion in relationships is not only important but also healthy. Couples need to enjoy being together in an intimate way. When relationships are troubled, the last thing either person wants is to be sexual or passionate with each other. However, this is a part of the healing and rebuilding of the relationship and although it might be awkward in the beginning, it is crucial. Make your intimate time together special. Surprise your mate with a warm bubble bath, lighted candles, soft music, and a bottle of wine, or reserve a nice romantic evening at a local hotel to include a wonderful candlelit dinner, fine wine, and a beautiful room.

Special Greeting

If your mate has to work late and you know he had a bad day, surprise him with a late-night gourmet meal. When you hear him arrive home, greet him in new, sexy lingerie, a warm kiss, and wonderful hot meal. After he picks himself up off the floor, he will fall in love with you all over again for this wonderful greeting. If reversed and the woman is coming home, after giving her a lingering kiss, have her join you in the dining room where the table is set with soft glowing candles and a wonderful meal. Have an envelope lying by her plate that when opened,

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she will read, "This certificate is good for one thirty-minute massage after dinner." This is how you keep romance alive!

Just Because

Give your mate gifts "just because." These do not have to be expensive whatsoever. For example, one woman had a miniature dish collection in her kitchen. Her husband came home and told her that he had a gift for her. Holding out her hand, he gently placed in her hand a miniature porcelain cup with her name neatly written in blue ink. She knew that this cup probably cost no more than \$2.00 but the thought that he would take the time to find something she enjoyed, was worth \$1 million. The small gifts packed with thought are far more cherished.

Say it with Words

Surprise your mate with little notes found in unexpected places. If your mate travels for work, place a loving note somewhere in their suitcase. Perhaps they have a long commute to work. If so, slip a note saying, "I love you," in their CD case where you know they will find it. Another recommendation is sticking a note on the bathroom mirror so this will be the first thing seen in the morning. Be creative and have some fun with this.

Cuddle Time

When couples first start dating, cuddling is usually a part of their everyday existence. However, as the relationship progresses or after children enter the picture, the cuddling stops. Take some time just to cuddle. If your mate is sitting on the couch watching a movie, or laying in bed reading, scoot close and tell them that you just want to cuddle. This makes both people feel secure and loved.

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Breakfast in Bed

When was the last time you or your mate were served breakfast in bed? Never? On a Saturday or Sunday, when nothing special is planned, get up a little early and fix their favorite breakfast. Include the morning newspaper as an added bonus. Although they may be shocked, you can be guaranteed that this gesture of love will be appreciated.

Be Kind to One Another

Unbelievably, kindness is often over simplified. Even good relationships can lack acts of kindness. This refers to “Do unto others...” Simple acts of kindness can have huge impacts on a relationship. If your husband or boyfriend is out working on the car on a hot summer day, make a thermos of ice-cold tea and take it to him, giving him a gentle kiss. If your wife or girlfriend has been working at the computer all day, walk up behind her and massage her shoulders and neck. You get the idea. Kindness means looking at the other person’s situation and seeing what you can do or add to that situation to make it better or easier. This is a way to validate your respect for each other. Kindness will go a long way in a relationship.

Special Hobby

Find some type of hobby that you both enjoy and then do it together. It might be that you both love refurbishing furniture. Turn this into an adventure of going to estate sales together to find nice pieces of furniture and then refurbishing them as a team. Another option would be if you have both wanted to learn how to ballroom or salsa dance. Take lessons together so you can then go out on the town and dance the night away. This is a great way to make your relationship even stronger while adding in something fun that you both enjoy.

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Listen – Really Listen

Get into a habit of listening to what your mate is saying. Not the kind of listening that you do when you go out or sit at the dinner table, but a different kind of listening. Have you ever overheard your mate make a comment to a friend or family member about something they really want or want to do? Maybe you heard your boyfriend or husband tell a friend that they would love a certain tool. For no reason whatsoever, make a special effort to get that for him. You might have heard your girlfriend or wife mention a spa that they would love to try. Again, without any reason, surprise her. This shows that your mate is really paying attention to things important to you.

Be a Kid

Do not be a prude. There is absolutely no reason why couples at any age cannot get into tickling matches or wrestle on the floor. Do not allow your relationship to grow old and stale. Understand and accept that it is perfectly fine to be silly from time to time. If you have nothing special planned on a Friday night, rent a few games, order in Chinese, plug in the Play Station, and play games.

Showing Love

Although hearing the words, “I love you” is special and important, sometimes you wish you could tell your mate as well as hear from your mate those words, but in special and unique ways. Here are some ideas of how this can be accomplished:

- Rent his favorite movie, even if it is something you do not like, and plan an evening alone where you can be with him as he enjoys his special treat.

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- When he gets out of the shower, hand him a warm, cozy towel just heated in the dryer.
- When you make him pancakes, first pour the words, “I Love You” on the griddle and cook for a minute to brown. Then, pour more batter over the words to create a round pancake. The result will be a pancake displaying those three special words when you flip it over.
- While he is out of town, wash his car and surprise him by picking him up in a clean, shiny car at the airport.
- Take him out to lunch.
- Have his favorite breakfast on the table along with the morning newspaper.
- Instead of bugging him to go to the grocery store with you, let him stay home.
- Display your favorite picture of the two of you on the refrigerator.
- Buy him a subscription to his favorite magazine.

Split the Responsibility

Whether dating or married, weekends are always full of errands and chores. If you find that on the weekend things are lopsided, help your mate out. For example, if there are kids involved and one has a soccer game while the other has a baseball game, at the same time, offer to take one of the kids and your mate take the other. Make this a special time by packing a special lunch or snacks. Perhaps one of you has company coming and the house needs to be cleaned, laundry done, and groceries purchased. Set aside something you need done and offer to pitch in to help. Simply say you want to help and ask which of the jobs you can take over. This gesture will show your mate that you really care by sacrificing your time.

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Love Means Having to Say You Are Sorry

If you make a mistake by doing or saying something that is hurtful or damaging to the relationship, say that you are sorry. Many people struggle with these words, even when they know that what they did was wrong. It actually takes a strong person to apologize. Do not wait until you think you have the courage but say it immediately, and with sincerity. Too often when couples argue, there is a long period of silence, which actually makes the anger and tension worse. You need to let your mate know immediately that you made a mistake and ask for forgiveness.

Be Yourself

Do not be phony in your relationship, trying to be someone or something different as a way to please your mate. For a relationship to work, both people need to be themselves and react to things naturally. Just imagine if you are really kind of on the silly side, enjoying life to the fullest. Then you meet a wonderful person who is much more conservative than you are. Because you are attracted to them, you try to squelch your normal vibrant personality. You are miserable and eventually, the person is going to be exposed to the “real” you. You have to base any relationship on honesty or it will eventually fall apart.

Compliment – A Lot

Be generous with compliments. It is very common for people to notice something nice about another person and think about it internally, but never voice it. When in a relationship, compliments are like glue. They hold the couple’s attention and respect. Make sure your compliments are genuine and based on something you see or hear your mate do. If you have a clogged garbage disposal and your boyfriend or husband is able to unclog it, compliment them on being handy. If your girlfriend or wife takes her mother to the doctor, compliment her on her

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generosity. The fact is that criticism is destructive and can very quickly tear a relationship apart. Just like the cliché, “If you do not have something nice to say, then do not say anything at all.” This is very true – take notice of the good things your mate does and make it known to them that you see and appreciate those things.

Realistic Expectations

No matter how wonderful and flawless your mate seems, no one is perfect. Be careful about putting someone on a pedestal, especially in the early stages of your relationship. Make sure that the expectations you have for your mate and yourself are realistic. There are going to be differences in opinion, and probably some disagreements. Also, do not assume that your mate knows how you feel or what you think about something. When discussing something important to you, ensure that you both understand the same thing. The reality is that neither one of you is going to know exactly what the other one needs. As long as you do not expect them to read your mind and accept that this is a part of getting to know one another and communicating, you will be fine.

Keep the Kids Out of It

Whether married or dating, if there are kids involved, it is crucial that they are not used as pawns in any situation. For example, if your mate wants to get intimate and you are not in the mood, do not say, “I need to help the kids with their homework,” or if something that needed to be done was not taken care of because you forgot, do not blame it on the kids by saying, “I was taking care of the kids and did not have time.” In the first scenario, be honest with your mate and tell them that you are very tired and while intimacy is important, you would prefer to make sure the kids are in bed on time so the two of you can have some quality time together. This opens an honest line of communication and does not place ill feelings on the kids, especially since it is not their problem to begin with.

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Listen to How You Talk

When working on your relationship, more than likely you and your mate have settled into a pattern of speaking to each other. It might be with short, blunt answers, heavy sighs as though bothered, or with negative remarks. Pay attention to not only your words spoken, but also the tone in which they are spoken. Be positive, cheery, and respond in a way that will confirm to your mate that you are listening and truly interested – that you have time to listen and communicate. In addition, add terms of endearment into your conversation. Instead of “Good morning,” try, “Hi honey, good morning!”

Turn the Computer Off

Often the computer becomes a replacement for a lack of something in the relationship. It might be just surfing, playing games, or getting involved with websites that promote pornography. If you notice that your mate is spending more and more time on the computer, take this as a sign that even if not doing anything wrong, they are choosing to spend the time with the computer instead of you. In other words, use this as a sign that something is missing in your relationship. Start by talking and searching to confirm what it is bothering your mate and then work on making it better!

I Forgive You

If something has happened in your relationship causing the trust to waiver, you will have many things to work through. When your mate has done something that requires you to forgive, you have to forgive, REALLY forgive. Once you have worked through the issue either together or with professional counseling, and you tell them that you forgive them, you can never hold that over them again. As an example, if your mate has had an affair and the two of you choose to work it out rather than throw the relationship away, once the problems are resolved

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and the forgiveness is said, it is done! This means that you cannot stalk your mate to ensure they are where they said they would be, call or page them throughout the day, constantly ask for reaffirmation of your relationship, it means that you forgive and put the past behind you and then move on in a new, strong, and healthy relationship. It will not be easy, but you can do it with the right help, attitude, and commitment.

Fighting No-No

While having disagreements is normal and sometimes when controlled, healthy for relationships, the place and degree of discussion are important. Keep your disagreements private. Being at a party or anywhere around family or friends and breaking into an argument is a great way to break down a relationship. Not only does it cause embarrassment for your mate, but it also puts a negative light on both of you from the people witnessing the fight. If you are in public and think you need to argue, at least find a quiet corner or separate room where you can discuss whatever it is bothering you.

Recommended Resources:

[1000 Questions For Couples](#). What You Absolutely Must Know About Your Relationship - Test Your Compatibility And Grow Deeper In Love.

[Communication Magic](#). The Amazing Formula For Communicating Straight From The Heart In Your Relationships.

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