

Nurturing Your Relationships



Relationships often weather life's hardships, struggles, and day-to-day responsibilities but it is easy to forget to laugh, communicate and make time for one another. To tend to your relationship, consider the following:

- **Make time.** Days are busy and stressful, and often you might feel pulled in many directions that you don't realize how little positive attention you give to your relationships. Positive attention goes beyond discussing work, bills or errands. Instead, it means making time to purposefully focus on each other in a positive manner. Try designating time each day or week to spend time alone together, even if it is only for a short time.
- **Communicate.** Of all the factors that influence a relationship's growth, the most important is communication. Good communication isn't easy - it requires concentration and energy. Decide to listen and then be willing to be quiet, to maintain eye contact, be open, and give feedback by paraphrasing (restating what the person has told you).
- **Be assertive.** Asking for what you want or need is a critical component of a healthy, growing relationship. Respectfully communicating your opinions, values and feelings is as important as being open-minded and tolerant of your partner's opinions and desires.
- **Strengthen your connection.** Simply spending time together doesn't always nurture a connection. Find out what you need to feel connected to your partner and vice versa. There are a variety of ways that couples connect, whether through talking about feelings, participating in activities together, or simply through the power of touch.
- **Try something new.** Take turns picking a new activity and have fun with it. Try to find activities that are new to both of you, like dance lessons, pottery classes or rowing. Shared experiences not only create lasting memories they also allow a couple to discover new territories and challenges.
- **Treat others the way you want to be treated.** If you want your partner to be more romantic or considerate be sure you are giving what you want to receive. Sometimes it is easier to focus on what we are not getting rather than what we are not giving.
- **It's the little things.** Romance is the intentional act of being thoughtful and loving. It doesn't need to involve money or time away. Instead, it can mean a few special words left for the other to find in the morning or a small gesture that puts their needs before you own.



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