



EMPLOYEE SERIES

Tips for Nurturing Love and Intimacy With Your Partner

We already know that joy and fulfillment - connection and intimacy in our relationships do require effort and energy. There is no secret, however, that every relationship has to navigate through troubled waters at some point in life. When relationships become gradually plagued by misunderstanding, unfaithfulness, insensitivity and mistrust, it may feel like a 'life time prison sentence' rather than an opportunity to create something beautiful and meaningful as partners. Often, such relationships lead everyone involved in them to feel anxious, angry or apathetic – a recipe for hurt and pain and even separation and divorce.

In its very nature, a couple relationship is a work of two people that begin to build their lives on individual differences and similarities. Most couples, when faced with challenges, genuinely hope to repair their hurt and move forward for a better place, where they could once again feel they are at the right place with the right person.

“The best gift you can give to each other and your children is a loving relationship”, says Prof. John Gottman, a renowned researcher on couple and family interactions.

So, make a conscious attempt to invite the following into the culture of your relationship:



More gratitude and appreciation and less criticism. Develop a habit to scan for what is present rather than missing in your relationship – what is going right rather going wrong. This is, of course, not ignoring what needs to improve in your relationship. Acknowledging simple things your partner does every day, will create a positive emotional atmosphere where you are able to have those difficult conversations when required. It will also help you to communicate the message “I see you and value your contribution to our relationship”. Fault-finding mind can lead to criticism and convey the message “I am right and you are wrong and therefore you need to fix yourself.”



More emotional connection and less distractions. Be aware of opportunities your partner is extending to connect emotionally with you and respond positively. It may be something very simple as turning towards your partner when they are talking, without fiddling with your phone. Any opportunity to respond to your partner’s emotional needs conveys the message “I am with you when you need me” and “We will get through this together no matter what we are faced with”. Often, at the core of most arguments is the failure to connect emotionally with your partner.



More listening and less defensiveness. Consider listening to each other as an investment you choose to make in your relationship. It conveys the message “I am interested in your life” and “You do matter and I want to hear what you’ve got to say”. This enables two individuals to reveal themselves without feeling threatened or judged. It can create safety and closeness with your partner – take responsibility for one’s mistakes – show respect for individual differences. Listening creates an opportunity for your partner to be a friend and enjoy each other’s company. Gradually, you will minimise the need to be defensive and react in ways that will cause hurt and disappointment.



More commitment and less uncertainty. Cherish your partner – their hopes and dreams for themselves and family as a unit. Making comparisons with other couples and families only lead to sense of disrespect and rejection of the uniqueness of the person you are with. This can make one or both parties to be less curious of each other, increase tension and insecurity – fear and suspicion. Commitment invites you to make your relationship to be the top priority and your partner the most important person in your life. This conveys the message “There is absolutely no other person that inspires me like you” and “I like everything about you as you are”. When your partner does not feel the pressure to fit into your world of expectations and standards, they are free to grow without fear and uncertainty.



More shared stories and memories and less tasks and goals. When relationships become something to work on or ‘to do list’ that needs to be achieved in the future, partners may lose sight of each other’s invitation for fun and adventure – enjoy the moment with sense of ease. It may feel like that it is a lot of hard work to be with your partner. It may be possible fatigue and boredom begin to creep into the relationship and eventually your partner to wonder “Why am I in this lifeless relationship?” Ongoing effort to create memories of fondness and friendship with your partner will assist in revitalising your relationship and avoid it falling into the territory of ‘same old, same old’.

Reference:

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-the-antidotes/>

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/healthy-relationships-in-practice/>

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-little-things-you-do/>

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/how-to-change-your-own-contempt/>

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