



## Healthy Relationships

A strong, healthy relationship can be one of the best supports in your life. Good relationships improve all aspects of your life, strengthening your health, your mind, and your connections with others. Knowing the basic principles of healthy relationships helps keep them meaningful, fulfilling, and exciting in both happy times and sad.

### Tip #1: Never stop communicating

Communication is key.... No really. Communication helps keep miscommunication at bay. Don't always make assumptions about what your partner is feeling, thinking or experiencing. Allow your partner to be vocal and disclose. This opens the door for validation. You may not always agree with how your partner is feeling but it is important to give validation to let them know they are heard and you are understanding of their feelings and perspective. Be vocal about intentions and create opportunities to have open dialogue.

### Tip #2: Expect ups and downs

In relationships, conflict and disagreements are inevitable. Expect for it to happen and be aware of how you can confront, process resolve conflict. Often this means coming to a compromise which can stem from hearing one another out and mutual validation.

### Tip #3: Spend quality time together

Commit to spending quality time together on a regular basis. Even during very busy and stressful times, a few minutes of really sharing and connecting can help keep bonds strong.

Find something that you enjoy doing together, whether it is a shared hobby, dance class, daily walk, or sitting over a cup of coffee in the morning.

Try something new together. Doing new things together can be a fun way to connect and keep things interesting. It can be as simple as trying a new restaurant or going on a day trip to a place you've never been before. It's critical for your relationship, to make time for yourselves. If you don't have quality time, communication and understanding start to erode.

Examples: Date Night Jar - Place ideas in a jar and draw them out on date night. Heads and Tails - Use a coin for directions to determine where to go for a date. Heads is up, Tails is right.



#### Tip #4: Keep physical intimacy alive

Touch is a fundamental part of human existence. Studies have shown that affectionate touch actually boosts the body's levels of oxytocin, a hormone that influences bonding and attachment. In a committed relationship between two adult partners, physical intercourse is often a cornerstone of the relationship. However, intercourse should not be the only method of physical intimacy in a relationship. Affection in the form of holding hands, hugging, or kissing is equally important. Physical intimacy can also be one way in which partners connect to each other. Other examples of physical affection: massage, cuddling, play wrestling, etc.

#### Tip #5: Relationships are about give and take

Healthy relationships are built on compromise, and it takes work on each person's part to make sure that there is a reasonable exchange. Knowing what is truly important to your partner can go a long way towards building goodwill and an atmosphere of compromise. On the flip side, it's also important for your partner to recognize your wants and for you to state them clearly.

#### **Resources:**

Relationship Help - Advice for Building Relationships that are Healthy, Happy and Satisfying

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/relationship-help.htm>

What Makes Marriage Work? - It's how you resolve conflict that matters most.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200910/what-makes-marriage-work>

What is a Healthy Relationship ?

<http://www.mcedv.org/what-healthy-relationship>

The 5 Love Languages

<http://www.5lovelanguages.com>