

RELATIONSHIP TIPS

What does it mean to have a real relationship, a relationship with substance? What does it take to have a relationship that not only lasts, but also thrives with loving connection? Here are 7 primary ingredients for relationship.

1. Appreciation. It's great to give compliments, to acknowledge the things your partner does for you, or how they look. However, a deeper appreciation includes the soul/spiritual qualities of your mate, like kindness, generosity, joy, childlike innocence or open heartedness. Appreciate who they are as well as what they do. Acknowledge the biggest gifts your beloved has brought into your life. This is real appreciation. Do it daily.

2. Vulnerability. This is the fast-track to relationship. We're taught to hide our vulnerability and, instead, only show our strength. Hiding your vulnerability may work well and keep us safe in the workplace or the streets but does not work well in relationships. We naturally feel closer to someone when they ask for support. Vulnerability takes courage and strength. Isolation, closing off and presenting a stoic "macho" front is a sign of fear, not strength or love.

3. Inner parent, inner child. As much as we'd like to think we are all grown up, there is still a small child part of us that needs to be acknowledged. Our inner child gets scared and needs love and attention from the inner parent of our partner. Ignoring your inner child is guaranteed to get you in trouble with your mate. This is a great gift we can give each other: the compassion to offer a hug, love, and soothing to our inner child self.

4. Sharing hurt feelings. Getting our feelings hurt by a loved one is unavoidable. This is a corollary to accepting our inner child. Many of us either don't recognize when our feelings are hurt, or don't express the hurt feelings we do recognize. Instead, we shut down, closing their heart, avoiding the possibility of confrontation. Or, we get angry and retaliate. Both of these approaches erode the love bond. We often cover our vulnerability with anger. "You hurt me, then I'll hurt you" is almost a reflex. The following sentence would be a better approach: "I trust that you didn't mean to hurt me when you said or did that, and it did hurt me." As usual, communication of our emotions and experience is crucial to a successful relationship.

5. Responsibility. Relationship requires that you take responsibility for your actions. One way to do this is to apologize to your mate when you hurt them ... whether intentionally or not. You may sometimes be so focused on the ways they hurt you that you miss the pain you cause them. Rather than taking the role of a victim, take responsibility for your own careless or unconscious actions or thoughts. "I'm sorry." Can lead to amends, at-one-ment, forgiveness, and healing woundedness.

6. Communication about sex. Couples rarely talk about their sexual relationship. But this area of relationship needs the most tender and caring

communication. If you sincerely incorporate the previous five ingredients into your relationship, you will notice an increased attraction between you. We suggest answering two questions as a great exercise: First, what is most beautiful about your partner's sexuality or your sexual relationship? It's more appreciation, but specifically focused on sexuality. And second, what do you need to allow your sexual relationship to be even more fulfilling? Start your answer with something like, "I love it when you ...," rather than "You need to ...". Keeping it positive will go a long way.

7. Spiritual connection. Nothing is more important than cultivating a spiritual connection with your beloved. Exactly what is this? It's understanding that there is something bigger than the personal love between the two of you. Call it what you will, God, Higher Power, Source, Universe, or Divine Love, it doesn't matter. What matters is that you learn to trust this spiritual energy and ask for help. The most important thing we can do each day is to sit together and acknowledge the Divine Presence, to give thanks for all that we are given, and to ask for help with what faces us. Find your own unique way to plug in and recharge your batteries. Create Relationship.

