

What's the key to successful relationships? Here, Ayesha Ali reveals the simple things you need to know to deepen your partnership and make your relationship work

24 tips for relationship success



1. Without quality time, your relationship will not survive. Carve out at least half an hour a night, and at least one day a month when you the two of you spend time exclusively together.

2. You will both need security, comfort. A good relationship is built on compromise and a great deal of give and take on both sides.

3. Keep your dependence and independence in balance. Tell and show your partner how much you need him, but don't cling, as that can make your partner feel trapped.

4. Encourage him to listen to you, by showing appreciation when he does. By the same token, show interest when he talks to you. Be aware that most men aren't mentally programmed for conversation in the way women are. They need more silence and internal time.

5. Make him appreciate you. Don't wait for a spontaneous compliment, but say something good

about yourself and ask for his agreement.

6. Learn to do the one thing that is most likely to restore good feeling in your relationship - giving your partner a genuine, loving and approving smile.

7. Often those subtle quirks that first attracted you to your partner can, with time, turn around and become toe-curlingly annoying habits. Learn to love him, warts and all.

8. Hidden resentments poison a relationship; so if something bothers you, say it. Remember that while men are wary of emotional conversations, they love to find solutions. Express your problem and then ask him to help you find the answer.

9. Learn that punishing your partner won't work. It may make you feel better to give him a hard time, but it will actually make him dig his heels in more. A better tactic is to reward the things you like and ignore what you don't like.

10. Money is the number one cause of couple conflict. For a relationship to work, you need to address your finances and work out a budget.

11. If the domestic work is not divided fairly

between you, it will create friction in your relationship. Make a list of the domestic tasks, talk it through with your partner and make the whole family, your partner included, take their share of the work.

12. If you have children, involve your partner as much as possible with them - even if you feel he's not as good as it at you are. It's important to present a united front to your children.

13. Sort out your relationship. It may flow over the years, but if it starts going downhill, just accept it. As soon as you notice a slide, question it and then work at bringing the passion back.

14. Don't assume. You may be tempted to have a fight as almost everyone else seems to need to learn to resolve their differences.

15. Remember that boredom typically breeds anger. If you feel bored, ask yourself why you're angry about it.

16. Be aware that men generally feel overwhelmed by emotion more than women do. If he's a tearful, half an hour 'unflooding' time will help get his back to work and make him more likely to interact positively with you.

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between you, it will cause friction in your relationship. Make a list of the domestic tasks, talk it through with your partner and mobilise the whole family, your partner included, to share the work.

12. If you have children, involve your partner as much as possible with the childcare - even if you feel he's not as good as it at you are. It's important to present a united front to your children.

13. Sort out your intimate relationship. It may ebb and flow over the years, but if it starts going downhill, don't just accept it. As soon as you notice a slide, question why and then work at bringing the passion back.

14. Don't assume you won't be tempted to have an affair as almost everyone is. You need to learn to resist.

15. Remember that boredom typically covers up anger. If you feel bored with him, ask yourself what you're angry about.

16. Be aware that men generally feel overwhelmed by emotion more than women do. If he's angry or tearful, half an hour's 'unflooding' time to himself will help get his balance back and make him more able to interact positively with you.

17. Learn how to argue well. The trick is to never say

anything that you wouldn't want to hear said to you.

18. Research suggests you need five positive experiences to erase the memory of one negative experience. So give five kind words for each negative comment. Give five hugs for each cold shoulder.

19. Learn how to negotiate. Each of you states what you want, then both of you work together to find a way forward.

20. Accept the things that won't change. Some characteristics about your partner are there for life - and you have to face that.

21. Learn to forgive. If you know you will never forgive your partner over something important, then give him - and yourself - a break and start again, with someone else.

22. Realise that the two of you will shift and change over the years. So, even if you think you understand him, or believe you have agreements sorted, check regularly - at least once a year - to make sure that neither of you has changed your mind.

23. Don't think that going to counselling equals failure. It can turn a bad relationship around. It can turn an average relationship into a brilliant one.

24. Know when to leave. If your life aims are incompatible, there are heavy drugs or violence around, or if there is consistently more pain than pleasure, then walk before the relationship destroys you. ■