

10 ways to improve your relationship

1. Notice your partner doing good things & let them know they are *appreciated*.
2. Every day express *gratitude* for the things you appreciate about your partner. This builds up the *emotional bank account*.
3. Really listen to what your partner is saying. Suspend judgments & invest effort to *understand* their needs & desires.
4. Spend time getting to know your partner's interests, likes, dislikes, favourite movies, music, friends etc. Remember, we change over time. Updating what we know about each other is essential. Maintaining *friendship* is critical.
5. Make deliberate plans to spend time as a couple having *fun* & building *shared experiences & memories*.
6. Negotiate, & agree upon, *expectations* & rules for home & beyond. Make *requests*, not demands.
7. Conflict is normal. When in conflict with your partner, look for the aspirations & future goals within that conflict. Always remember, the presence of *contempt, criticism, defensiveness, & stonewalling* in conflict is highly destructive. (Contempt is the number one predictor of divorce.)
8. Manage your *stress, anxiety, & anger* levels by learning techniques to reduce your physiological & psychological symptoms such as increased heart rate, tightness in the body, & unhelpful thinking style.
9. When your partner *bids* for your attention, *turn towards* them & show genuine interest. Bids & turns are the basis for romance, passion, & sex. (Turning *away & against* is unhelpful).
10. Keep calm & breath. Speak & listen non-defensively. Validate your partner. Practice, practice, practice!

And, maintain a sense of *humour*...