

## Sweet Tips for a Happy Relationship

When it comes to relationships, it might seem like we should just know how to build a happy one, but sometimes it doesn't hurt to have a reminder of some of the basic tried and true principles that can take all relationships to a happy place. Take the challenge to make each one of these happen regularly.

- ♥ Communicate. Check with each other every day and share your joys and frustrations will help you strengthen and maintain your friendship. Take 10 minutes today and ask your partner and open-ended question such as his or her current favorite movie or music, or a favorite vacation memory. Any open-ended question is great as long as you are taking the time to reconnect and listen to each other.
- ♥ Be positive. Even on tough days we can make the choice to be positive and to build up and praise others. Take time each day to share something you appreciate about your sweetheart.
- ♥ Take time to play. Having fun together helps us to remember why we chose to be together in the first place and builds our friendship that will help us to be strong, even in tough times. Set a date to do something fun together. It doesn't have to be expensive or elaborate.
- ♥ Build memories and rituals together. Traditions and rituals add meaning to our lives, create memories and help us to appreciate the small moments together. Take a moment to consider what traditions you have they may be holidays you celebrate or even daily rituals such as ways to say hello or good bye. Is it time to add or change something that can help you get closer as a couple?
- ♥ Discuss expectations and resolve conflicts when they are small. Everyone has disagreements but when we communicate with love and respect and discuss frustrations when they are small, we can usually resolve conflicts much more easily than after they build. When discussing frustration with your spouse, use "I" statements. For example, fill in these blanks, "I think..."(share concern), "I feel..."(share your emotion), and "I want..."(Share what you would like to see happen).
- ♥ Be affectionate. While we all have different ways we would prefer to express and receive love, all relationships flourish in an atmosphere of love and affection. We can show that we care in many ways such as leave a note, sending a text just to say hi, holding hands, kissing hello and goodbye. Strengthen your relationship today by showing affection to your sweetheart in some way.
- ♥ Take time to pray. Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott say, "There is an aching in our souls for a deeper meaning and connection with our partner and with God." Being involved in service together by reaching out to others can help build that spiritual relationship and help make your intimate relationship stronger. Pray together speaking or in silence. You can write down your prayers, pray as you walk, pray as you talk.

Sources: Utah State Extension, Focus on the Family