

Expert Relationship Advice: Four Ways a Positive Attitude is Good for You



By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

It seems Hollywood celebrities are famous not only for their creative work, but also for their personal lives. Everybody has a story about their road to success, but amid the sparkle of superstardom and robust social media platforms, there are a handful of celebrities like [Emily Blunt](#), [Jim Carrey](#), [J.K. Rowling](#), and [Shania Twain](#), who persevered despite personal obstacles and adopted a profoundly positive attitude.

Now, studies show that not only is a positive attitude good for your career and relationship, but it is also good for your health. Here are four reasons from [relationship expert](#) Dr. Amy Osmond Cook why looking at the bright side of life is good for you. This [expert relationship advice](#) will help you build a happier life for you and your partner!

Expert Relationship Advice to Cultivate Positivity

1. It controls stress: Nobody would deny that stress is real, but sometimes the way we view various stresses in our life makes a big difference in how we manage it.

As the administrator of Park Manor, a busy rehabilitative care center, Ben Flinders is aware of the stress this work environment presents to his staff. Flinders recognizes his role in creating a supportive environment that fosters

positivity in the workplace. “For example, sometimes the best way to navigate the stress of work that robs us of needed energy is to step away and relax,” he said. “Many times, a quiet walk during a work break or a brief meditation session can help relieve pressure.” His management style encourages staff to work smarter not just harder by self-monitoring energy levels, emotions, and attitude and to take necessary measures to refocus.

“Positive thinking doesn’t mean that you keep your head in the sand and ignore life’s less pleasant situations,” says the staff at the [Mayo Clinic](#). “Positive thinking just means that you approach unpleasantness in a more positive and productive way. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst.” Having that kind of mental control over any outcome is a powerful tool to control stress.

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2. Reduces recovery time: Healthcare providers witness the power of a positive attitude daily. “Our therapists are experts at providing care, but they also recognize that a positive attitude enhances those services,” said [Karissa Ly](#), director of rehabilitation at St. Francis Heights Convalescent Hospital. “Attitude makes the body more receptive to recovery, and it can heighten a patient’s belief in themselves to get better.” Ly added that the physical work is important in recovery, but it also requires a mental toughness that needs positivity to support it.

3. Improves social connections: As more [studies](#) emerge emphasizing the importance of friendships and social interaction, they also note that a positive attitude is an important vehicle to secure those social connections. “In short, they (optimists) manage their relationships better, and as a result, when faced with adverse health events, they can rely on their social networks to a much greater degree and

receive more support, managing the resulting stress more effectively,” explains PsychologyToday.com contributor [Utpal Dholakia, Ph.D.](#)

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4. Extends longevity: A [study](#) published by The Journals of Gerontology examined the relationship between an optimistic perception of aging and its impact on reducing markers of stress-related inflammation associated with heart disease and other illnesses. It seems a positive attitude will help you live longer and it will influence healthier lifestyle choices, as well. “Every day brings new challenges,” says [Martha Beck](#), author, speaker, and life coach. And how we face those challenges plays an important part in our health. So when life warrants an attitude adjustment—be grateful! It’s good for you.

For more information about and articles by our relationship expert Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, click [here](#).

Expert Relationship Advice: 4 Ways to Build a Healthy Relationship with Your Body



 By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

If you hope to build healthy relationships with other people, the best [expert relationship advice](#) is to start on your relationship with your body.

Body shaming is a real issue. [Selena Gomez](#) responded to it and so did Tyra Banks. Even celebrity [Emma Stone](#) wasn't immune from an encounter. The repercussions of this are a soaring number of cases of eating disorders and depression. For instance, the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders reports that at least [30 million](#) people of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorder in the US.

Social and political forums are scrambling to find ways to eliminate body shaming activities. One of the best defenses you can build against forming a negative self-image is to concentrate on building a healthy relationship with your body. "I am not a woman whose self-worth comes from her dress size," says [Kristen Bell](#) when confronted with negative comments about her physical appearance. "Comparison is one long, agonizing death and does not interest me at all."

Working on your relationship with your body will help you build healthy relationships with others. Here are four tips from [relationship expert](#) Dr. Amy Osmond Cook.

Expert Relationship Advice for Loving Your Body

1. What you eat is what you are: The focus of a healthy diet shouldn't rest on deprivation or discouragement. Instead, healthy eating is about providing fresh, nutritious, quality foods that nourish your body. We have the power to choose what fuels our body. One trend that supports a healthy relationship with our body is cooking at home. [Market research](#) shows the meal kit delivery services industry generated almost \$1.5 billion dollars in sales over the past three years and projections estimate a multi-billion dollar growth in the next five years. [Culinary schools](#) that cater to the amateur chef are popping up in cities across the country, offering hands-on

instruction from professional chefs. The idea is to embrace healthy eating, which in turn, allows us to celebrate our bodies.

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2. Make exercise a routine: The benefits of an exercise routine extends beyond better health. A commitment to daily exercise helps other aspects of our lives, especially our jobs, by developing self-discipline, time management skills, and increased productivity. “Some employers take a healthy workforce for granted, until they aren’t,” says [Ryan Westwood](#), CEO of Simplus, who encourages exercise in the workplace.

“Employed athletes who pursue passions outside of the workplace bring that self-discipline to their job,” says [Cody Ferraro](#), cofounder of InXAthlete, and a former collegiate Lacrosse player. “What an employer gets is a productive, self-motivated employee who has a strong concept of time-management.”

Along with the physical benefits, exercise enhances mood and staves off depression. “Even moderate physical activity improves muscle strength, maintains healthy joints and bones, and it can help reduce high blood pressure,” said [Tonya Fisher](#), executive director of Bainbridge Island Health and Rehabilitation. The [American Psychological Association](#) says that researchers have also explored exercise as a tool for treating, and perhaps preventing, anxiety. A strong body boosts a strong mind, and that reinforces a healthy relationship between both.

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3. Find a purpose: An essential defense against negativity is finding meaningful ways to spend your time. “Living on purpose feels alive, clear, and authentic,” say [Barb Leonard, PhD, RN,](#)

[PNP, and Mary Jo Kreitzer, RN, PhD](#). The article also points out that purpose influences health, including life extension, reduced risk of heart disease and Alzheimer's disease, and it allows for better pain management. In a world seemingly brimming with shallow, superficial conversations, finding a deeper meaning that adds value to your life is a solid strategy for being a part of the world but not consumed by it.

4. Surround yourself with great friends: Whether conscious or not, experts say we are defined by the people with whom we spend the most time. "Your best friend could be a key contributor to your success," said CNBC contributor [Ruth Umoh](#). "[Research](#) shows that having a close friend boosts your resilience and helps you bounce back from hardships."

One of the reasons why celebrities can bounce back from harsh criticism is their social support system. Although it may seem the more popular the star, the bigger the entourage, experts say quality outweighs quantity when it comes to friendships. "Although being friendly can get you more friends, you don't need hundreds to help you through life," says [Susan Krauss Whitbourne, Phd](#). "You may have to prune your friendship tree as you get older to be sure that you give enough attention to the ones who will really matter for your well-being."

By focusing on diet, exercise, personal fulfillment, and great friends, you will develop a healthy relationship with the one person who matters most: you.

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Expert Relationship Advice: Spring Cleaning Tips for a Happier Life



 By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

When the smell of spring is in the air, it can only mean one thing. No, not the spring sale at Neiman Marcus. Instead, for many of us, the end of winter ignites a passion for cleaning. But along with hauling old furniture and clothing to the curb, let's take a look at our emotional well-being and the relationship we have with others.

So, in the spirit of renewal, here are four areas where we can benefit from some mental and emotional spring cleaning. Don't miss the [expert relationship advice](#) below!

Expert Relationship Advice for Spring Cleaning

1. Examine relationships: It's time to address the negative feelings that may be lingering with others. "Releasing your grip on a gripe can free up emotional energy that you can then invest in other, more positive areas of your life," says [Julie Hanks, PhD, LCSW.](#)

This same belief also applies to people who may have a negative influence on your ability to feel good about yourself. "Feel good about who you are, how you have grown, and what you offer in your personal and professional

relationships,” says [Jeffrey Bernstein, PhD](#). “If you have trouble remembering your own value, then think about what you would say to a family member or close friend who wanted to return to a toxic relationship.” Bernstein says thinking about how you may value or advise someone else can help you treasure yourself and move on.

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2. Find your passion: There’s doing things you enjoy, and then, there’s doing things about which you are passionate. “I’ve always said that passion is my drug of choice,” says [Steve Sims](#), a professional ultimate experience concierge, founder of Bluefish, and author of *Bluefishing: The Art of Making Things Happen*. “I can get further with passion than I can with any amount of money in the world. Passion is my secret weapon.”

Hey, we all have dreams: We can visualize our dream vacation, career, life experience, celebrity encounter, or life partner. But Sims often encounters clients who are afraid to realize those dreams or passions. “One of my first questions for clients is how far they are willing to go to make this passion – this experience – truly unforgettable.” If you are ready to uncover your passion, three of Sims’ many life lessons are to never underestimate the power of simplicity, to ask yourself why this matters to you, and to realize that nothing is ever going to happen if it benefits only you. “Work for win-win every time,” Sims says.

3. Make physical health a priority: Remember that New Year’s resolution to lose 10 pounds? Fewer than [10 percent](#) of us actually achieved that goal. However, it’s never too late to adopt healthy lifestyle choices. With the warmer weather and more hours of sunlight, outdoor activities and exercise are easier. And research shows that exercise is not only good for your body but that the brain gets a healthy boost as well.

“Exercise is a scientifically proven mood booster, decreasing symptoms of both depression and anxiety,” says a published article from [Walden University](#). “Physical activity kicks up endorphin levels, the body’s famous ‘feel good’ chemical produced by the brain and spinal cord that produces feelings of happiness and euphoria.”

Experts say even moderate weekly exercise can improve depression and anxiety. In some cases, doctors recommended an exercise regimen for these conditions before turning to medication, which is particularly good for older adults who are generally [more susceptible](#) to depression. “Clinical depression is a major concern for those of us working in healthcare since it is so common with older adults,” says [Derek R. Orme](#) of Mission Hills Post Acute Care. “Healthcare providers and loved ones focus on the physical needs of patients, but we also need to make sure their emotional needs are addressed.”

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4. Declutter: Whether it’s clearing out stuff in the closet, garage, or your married and gone son’s bedroom, removing the physical clutter from your surroundings is essential for your mental health. “Clutter can increase stress by distracting us and overwhelming our senses with extraneous stimuli – toppling piles and unsightly messes as well as associated smells and noises,” says [Jonathan Fader, PhD](#).

[Organizing expert Lauren Piro](#) says that when facing a cluttered space, we should ask ourselves tough questions like, “Is this item enhancing my life?” or “Is this something I’ll want my children to see one day?” Sometimes, forcing yourself to defend owning an item can help gain a realistic perspective on the true value of that item. Keep in mind that you don’t have to clear the area to gain inner peace. “Take comfort in knowing that your home and desk do not have to be pristine for

optimal living and working,” says Fader. “The key is finding what environment is most efficient and productive for you.”

Now is the time for some personal spring cleaning. By tending to relationships, our health, passions, and the physical clutter that surrounds us, we are on the road to authentic rejuvenation and renewal.

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Expert Dating Advice: Tips for Romance That's Just Around the Corner When You've Been Around the Block



 By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

For many of us, a lost opportunity at love or the end of a long-term relationship can sometimes make us feel like a second chance just isn't in the cards. And when Valentine's Day is focused on romantic dinners for two or coupled walks on the beach, it can be a painful reminder of what we lack.

Let's face it. There's no substitute for young love, but that doesn't mean we can't enjoy being loved again later in life, especially for seniors. “Fortunately, in some ways, there has never been a better time for women over 60 to be in the dating world,” says [Margaret Manning](#). “The rise of divorce among ‘silver splitters’ means there are more single older men – and

there might be more great guys out there than you might expect at first glance, especially if you give them a chance.”

Expert Dating Advice for Older Adults

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A loving and caring companionship is a good thing, but it's also important to recognize that it's different for older adults. If you find yourself ready to take a shot at love again, here are three pieces of [expert dating advice](#) for making this experience feel as good as if it was new.

1. Instead of going for red hot, opt for a slow burn: Daters who are 50 and older tend to be less impulsive. And AARP writer [Ken Solin](#) says that's a good thing: “By now, we've collected enough life experience to know better than to fall for the first person we meet,” said Solin. “We understand what works for us and what doesn't.” For older adults, the belief that a fulfilling relationship is out there waiting for us still holds true. The difference is that we are willing to wait for the right person to come along.

2. Bring the [Sex-C](#) back: Instead of relying on intercourse to be the foundation for your budding relationship, a growing community is coming forward with conversations about intimacy challenges. [Laura Brashier](#), founder of RomanceOnly.com, helped ignite this conversation when she pioneered a site designed for people whose physical and emotional challenges prevent them from engaging in intercourse. “While these people are unable to have intercourse, they still crave intimacy but are unable to open up about it,” says Brashier. “I've discovered that people facing difficulties with sexual intercourse still want to show love and be loved in return.”

Sharing intimate moments with someone you love is an essential part of a growing relationship, but for older adults, that doesn't always require intercourse. Instead, a loving couple can explore other ways to share pleasure and develop a personal connection. It can be as simple as spending a whole day together erranding, participating in common interests, sharing meals, and everything in between – and then parting ways at sunset.

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3. Expect respect: At this stage of life, older adults know what they want and what they deserve in a relationship. Yes, we want romance and attention, but we also need respect. “We all need respect, especially from those who are closest and most intimately connected with us,” says [Peter Gray, PhD](#). “It seems to me that women, even more than men, have suffered when love directed toward them is not accompanied by respect.” It's helpful to discover common interests, but a caring partner will also respect differing hobbies or career choices. For instance, if your partner cannot understand why you would pursue teaching as a career or insists that you give up bowling league to spend more time at the theater, these may be signs that your new squeeze is a drip. “A lack of respect is unacceptable under any circumstances, but it's especially intolerable on a first encounter because it's unlikely to improve with time,” says Solin.

Love certainly has its share of unpredictable twists, but there has never been an easier time to navigate those turns. For instance, with online dating sites catering to older adults and those facing struggles with intimacy, the ability to connect is offering new hope to older adults every day. By using a strategy that includes things like patience, honest communication about intimacy – and, above all, respect – you're on the right track to finding new love again.

For more information about and articles by our relationship expert Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, click [here](#).

Relationship Advice: Keys to Growing a Business When the Marriage is Over



By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D](#)

Hollywood certainly has its share of dramatic endings – relationship endings, that is. Stars like Laurence Fishburne, Fergie, Chris Pratt, Jennifer Hudson, and Danica Patrick, to name a few, were invested in a long-term [celebrity relationship](#) and either personally or professionally called it quits. But what happens when a couple’s livelihood relies on maintaining a relationship after the marriage is over?

Christina and Tarek El Moussa can relate. After becoming household names as co-hosts of HGTV’s hit reality TV show *Flip or Flop*, they publicly announced their [celebrity divorce](#) just over a year ago. Despite moving on in their personal lives, both are committed to working together to make their successful business grow.

Related Link: [Celebrity Divorce: Christina & Tarek El Moussa Announce Break-Up](#)

It’s not uncommon for former partners to maintain a business relationship. There are an estimated [3.3 million businesses](#) in the U.S. that are jointly owned by spouses. In some cases, a partner buys out the remaining portion of the business. But in

a growing number of cases, the former married couple opt to remain invested in the business long after the divorce is final.

“I worked with one business where, actually, [the ex-spouses] were better business partners and got along better after the divorce and stayed together within the business for a while,” says [Dann Van Der Vliet](#), executive director of the Smith Family Business Initiative at the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University. Van Der Vliet believes that, when the divorce relieves the anxiety in a relationship, the partners can focus on the strengths they contribute to the business.

Reality TV Stars Open Up About Celebrity Divorce & Share Relationship Advice

I talked with Christina and Tarek about their transition from a blended life to one that is now exclusively professional. They shared five rules they follow to maintain a positive and supportive professional relationship, even though they now lead separate personal lives:

1. Be professional: Part of their success derives from their ability to separate professional obligations from personal responsibilities. “We believe in this company, and that means keeping our personal lives separate,” Tarek explains. “When we’re on set, it’s like a different life than what we live outside of the set. When we’re doing our job, we’re doing our job.”

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2. Focus on the ultimate goal: Whether it’s personal or business, staying focused on your goals can help minimize

distractions. “Every day that we film, I remember why I’m there,” says Tarek. He says his priority is to support his kids and family. “Second, I remember how I worked my entire life to build this thing. I don’t want to throw it away because of a divorce. We are good at what we do,” he adds. “We love flipping houses, and we enjoy delivering a great TV show that helps change people’s lives.”

3. Put kids first: Tarek and Christina understand that it is in everyone’s best interest to get along. “Children come first, and that means doing things that are best for them,” says Christina. “In our children’s case, it was in their best interest to do things together.” Often that decision requires some sacrifice and adjustments on the parent’s part.

4. Don’t sweat the small stuff: When tensions are high, it seems everything is a big deal. Immediately after a divorce, no matter how amicable, there is going to be a transition period. “Take time apart in all areas to better understand what you want,” says [Kate Taylor](#). “As you redefine your relationship, you should draw clear lines around your roles and responsibilities at work.”

Christina quickly discovered that not everything is worth fighting about. “When you’re not with that person, you’re not entitled to have those disagreements anymore,” she shares. “When Tarek and I first separated, if there was a disagreement, it was important that we walk away from it.” When disagreements happen, her rule is: Don’t react, because that is the moment when you need to think more clearly.

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5. Keep it fun: Tarek and Christina make sure to contribute to a positive work environment. Their professionalism means everyone feels happy and comfortable when they are at work. “We have a great crew,” says Christina. “We’ve been friends

with all of them for a long time. Because of that, it makes everything much easier because it's such a great workplace."

There are those who are skeptical that this type of relationship can work, but Christina is unfazed by the criticism. "Business is what we've always done best together. Tarek and I both agree that we work great together regardless of whether or not we are married," she explains. "We make a great co-parenting team as well. There is nothing I would have done differently."

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Dating Advice: The Sex-C Single's Guide to Confidence in Holiday-ting



By [Amy Osmond Cook](#)

Hello, holidays! Aside from the huge boon this season is to retailers, there's no other time of year when online dating sites see their [biggest spikes in activity](#). Romance-seekers start wondering: Who do I bring to my company party? Who should I enroll in my family's festivities? Who's my plus-one to my coupled best friends' snowsport weekend? And who'd be in for the ride if they knew I couldn't have intercourse?

Make no mistake: There are [millions](#) of people who remain silent and grapple with that question, and it's confidence-shattering enough to cause them to dodge dating altogether.

Health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, cancers and related treatments, traumas, congenital abnormalities, and even PTSD can preclude individuals from engaging in sexual intercourse – as would be expected in the course of a romantic relationship.

Dating Advice for the Holidays

Related Link: [Expert Relationship Advice: First Comes Love – Now What? Creating Intimacy Without Intercourse](#)

This makes modern-day dating especially tough. There is one online dating site, [RomanceOnly.com](#), that completely eliminates the need to disclose this dilemma. After all, Sex-C (sexually-challenged) men and women are no different from anyone else in their needs for affection, companionship, and attraction-based physical connection. Sex-C individuals are also in the same holiday-ting quandary as the rest of singledom. Rather than sidelining the pursuit of someone special, here is some [dating advice](#) to improve the Sex-C adult's chances of kindling a real connection this season.

Jingle, Jingle: Get Out and Mingle!

A person who sees themselves as different in a shameful way can experience crushed self-confidence, which in turn can cause them to [avoid social interactions](#). But in truth, getting outside of oneself, if even just to [smile at a stranger](#), can really make a difference in restoring self-confidence. Talk to that person in line next to you at the grocery store. Accept invitations to parties – and don't hesitate to go alone! Join a local Meetup group. You'll not only meet fascinating people, but by being open to being out there, you'll increase your chances of meeting someone special.

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“Remember it’s a numbers game,” says Laura Brashier, the visionary behind the world’s premier Sex-C dating website. Any measure that helps you to be open and upfront from the beginning about the awful quandary of “when and how do I share my secret” serves as one less stressor in dating. But it all starts with building confidence, and that starts with meeting people and finding a common interest. Shared commonalities are the cornerstone of any fulfilling relationship. “True pleasure can be found in a variety of social connections and relationships.”

Spread Holiday Cheer: Go Volunteer!

When people desire a deeper and more satisfying relationship, character counts. You’re not defined by your inability to have intercourse! The holidays abound with opportunities to work alongside other volunteers looking to help those in need. It’s another wonderful chance to get out and do something good for others that will make you feel even better about yourself. If the person next to you is attractive or interesting, don’t hold back in asking them out! Start with something simple, like a coffee date – you’ll know in 30 minutes if there’s a connection.

[Date ideas](#) like hiking, dancing, attending concerts, pairing up to take an art or cooking class, spending a couple hours at a museum together, or trying a restaurant that’s new to both people are all ways to gauge common interests. They’re great avenues by which two people can share interesting and meaningful things together, which are building blocks for a solid relationship – friendships and romantic partnerships alike!

“The benefits of such activities extend beyond the immediate pleasure of being together,” says [HealthyWomen.org](#). “The new interests will stimulate your brain and provide numerous new opportunities for conversation.” Finding things in common makes for a nice beginning.

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Naughty or Nice: Sex-C Delights

Once you feel you've found that special someone to take beyond the mistletoe, there are plenty of options for physical delights outside of intercourse. When you think about sexiness, the authentic allure of a desired person goes beyond the temporal desire of sex itself and rests on a physically sensual connection. It's a spark, an undeniable urge to share yourself physically with another. RomanceOnly.com offers [articles](#) that cover alternatives to intercourse that can spice up any couple's physical connection.

According to Michael Castleman, M.A., [great sex without intercourse](#) means experimenting, which can feel strange. But he says, "Novelty is key to sexual zing. Doing things differently stimulates the brain to release dopamine, and dopamine heightens erotic intensity. Once you get on board with sex without intercourse, it's pretty easy. It involves the same leisurely, playful, whole-body touching, caressing, and massage that sex therapists recommend to all lovers."


So for all you Sex-C people, make your holidays merry and bright by putting yourself out there. You have nothing to lose but being alone! Go to some of your local community events, listen to music, and just put yourself out there. Say yes even if you're tired! When you do meet someone, and even if that the person doesn't seem like The One, go and just have fun. Always date safely with exit options. The bottom line is that you deserve the companionship you're after, and you can't find it until you connect with others.

Cheers to 2018!

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Expert Relationship Advice: First Comes Love – Now What? Creating Intimacy Without Intercourse



 By [Amy Osmond Cook](#)

The power of love can never be underestimated, but it is also often misunderstood. As one of the leading Google search topics, the matter of love and how it pairs with sex is on most people's minds. It's possible to have sex without love, but can love survive without sex?

Most people say yes. A [study](#) conducted at San Diego State University reported that couples who reported having a satisfying relationship also reported having less sex as the relationship progressed. In an era where sex is used to sell everything from perfume to bathroom cleaner, this study shows that people may be buying it, but they aren't necessarily "doing it."

Relationship Advice on How Sex Relates to Love

"Despite their reputation for hooking up, Millennials and the generation after them (known as iGen or Generation Z) are actually having sex less often than their parents and grandparents did when they were young," says Jean M. Twenge,

the study's lead author and professor of psychology at San Diego State University.

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Recognizing that romantic love and intercourse can be mutually exclusive is encouraging news for millions of people who are unable to "seal the deal." Whether limited by emotional challenges or physical obstacles, these champions of celibacy are coming forward with candid conversations, new desires, and innovative ways to create satisfying relationships beyond the bedroom.

"While these people are unable to have intercourse, they still crave intimacy but are unable to open up about it," says Laura Brashier, founder of RomanceOnly.com, a site that promotes and supports those seeking intercourse-free relationships for "whatever" reason. "I've discovered that people facing difficulties with sexual intercourse still want to show love and be loved in return."

1. Connection: Successful connection requires recognizing the difference between love and erotic love. "Love proper is to do with the other person," says [Olivia Fane](#), [relationship author](#) and sex therapist. "It is about the care, respect, and understanding of that human other. Love like this grows; it cannot help it. The more of yourself you invest in another person, the more you receive." This connection unites two beings into one unit; their pain is your pain, and their joy is yours too.

2. Unconditional Caring: An authentic love says I care how you feel. But loving unconditionally doesn't mean you have the responsibility to deliver everything the other person wants. "When we love people unconditionally, we accept them as they are and how they aren't and contribute to their happiness as wisely as we can," says Greg Baer, MD., author of *Real Love:*

The Truth about Finding Unconditional Love & Fulfilling Relationships. Connection happens when we genuinely care about the happiness of the person with whom we share our lives.

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: Listen With Your Heart](#)

3. Communication: It's one of the most common pieces of [expert relationship advice](#): Honest and open communication is an integral part of a healthy, loving relationship. For people struggling with sexual intercourse, the anxiety that accompanies being honest about their inability is hard to express. "Knowing what each party brings into a relationship and being able to own and acknowledge this can often provide a basis from which a couple can grow and improve together," says psychotherapist [Michael Betts, MSc, MBACP](#). Rather than viewing sexual intercourse as a deficit, people can emphasize other qualities that they can contribute to a relationship.

4. Intimacy: As noted earlier, intercourse does not equate to meaningful intimacy. In fact, in many cases, it is the total opposite. "Our cultural talent for commercialization has separated out sex from intimacy," says [Lori H. Gordon](#). "In fact, intimacy involves both emotional and physical closeness and openness. But we wind up confusing the two and end up feeling betrayed or used when, as often happens, we fail to satisfy our need for closeness in sex." Sharing time and experiences, engaging in meaningful conversation, being responsive to needs, cuddling, and enjoying non-sexual physical contact help a couple feel valued, cared for, and safe. And all of these factors contribute to feelings of intimacy.

To paraphrase lyricist [Jackie DeShannon](#), what the world needs now is not more sex, but love, sweet love. And not just for some but for everyone. For those suffering from sexual challenges—as well as those who don't—physical gratification outside of intercourse, within a loving relationship, is an intimacy in a league of its own where both sides win.

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Relationship Advice: Is Your Job Killing Your Relationship? How To Choose The Right Company To Work For?



 By [Dr. Amy Osmond Cook](#)

When Andy Sachs ([Anne Hathaway](#)) took the job as an assistant for the infamous Miranda Priestly, (Meryl Streep) in the 2006 hit, *The Devil Wears Prada*, viewers knew things would get rough in the workplace. But this movie also illustrates the impact a stressful work environment has on a relationship. Studies conducted by [relationship experts](#) show that more than half of women are kept awake at night by job-related stress, according to [Metro.co.UK](#). Fortunately, not all bosses have this negative influence on employees, and many leading companies place employee engagement and job satisfaction as top priorities. Here are three things to look for in a company that values your personal life as well as your work life so you can avoid [relationship problems](#).

Relationship advice that will help you balance work and love!

1. Choose a company that values flexibility. In a global economy supported by cloud technology, the parameters for innovative work structures are more flexible than ever. For example, companies like Simplus and Clif Bar offer remote and flexible work schedules for full-time employees. “That’s why nine out of ten employees report plans to grow with their companies for a long time,” says Jennifer Parris from WorkFlexibility.org. “And workers, grateful for the flex, report that the overwhelming majority (95 percent) will do extra if it means getting the job done.”

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2. Choose a company that values culture. Finding a company that values a positive work culture means management respects work boundaries and recognizes the importance of personal time. “We often hire with our work culture in mind,” says Ryan Westwood, CEO of Simplus. “We want our employees to thrive, and we understand that supporting employees’ personal lives is an important part of that. We aim for high employee satisfaction, which is one reason we were ranked the #2 top company culture by Entrepreneur Magazine.” Things like yoga classes, healthy lunches, and generous vacation packages ensure companies retain valued staff, and employees can focus on other things when the workday is over.

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3. Choose a company with good benefits. While things like prenatal care or family dental coverage may not matter now, however a solid benefits package will support you when your

long-term goals include starting a family, buying a home, or retiring early to kayak around the world. A generous benefits package means a company wants to keep you around for a while and be a part of your personal and professional growth.

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Contrary to what the movies may show, a qualified employee shouldn't have to sacrifice a valued relationship for work demands. Follow this work-related [relationship advice](#), and you're sure to bypass all that unnecessary stress Andy Sachs had to put up with. If you have the skills that an employer values, you can position yourself for positive professional momentum while nurturing cherished relationships at home.

For more information about and articles by our relationship expert Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, click [here](#).

Relationship Advice: Our Connection With Sleep



By [Dr. Amy Osmond Cook](#)

More people do this than you may think. [Taylor Swift](#) does it. [Kendall Jenner](#) does it, too. Some people have caught [Katy Perry](#) and Demi Lovato doing it, and supermodel Heidi Klum credits it as one of her best beauty secrets. What are they doing? They nap. And they make sure to get a good night's sleep. With less than 40 percent of Americans getting a satisfactory amount of sleep each night according to [gallup.com](#), it is evident we have a love/hate relationship

with sleep. What happens when we sleep? And why is it so important for our well-being? “While we doze, our brains and bodies aren’t slacking off, they’re at work, repairing us after the day’s battles and refueling us for tomorrow’s slog-in more ways than you likely realize,” [prevention.com](https://www.prevention.com) writer Sarah Klein says. The brain and heart are recharging, the liver is detoxifying the day’s activities, and skin cells are reproducing and repairing. With the role of sleep being such an important part of our wellness, it’s time we build a healthy relationship with sleep. Here are four ways to do it.

Want to feel less tired during the day? Then follow this relationship advice about sleep.

1. Don’t ignore sleep. The notion that sleepless people can accumulate a “sleep debt” is true. And the long-term effects of neglecting the need for better sleep can have a negative effect on daytime functions. “The curious thing is that with sleep deprivation, you can only pay off a recent debt,” Brandon Peters, M.D. says. “Fortunately, the short-term effects of sleep deprivation are quickly reversed by getting adequate rest.” Although the damage from years of not sleeping may be difficult to remedy, we can start improving our sleep habits now with immediate benefits like improved motor skills, better concentration, and decision-making skills.

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2. Pampering is required. The best way to welcome a good night’s sleep is to adhere to a routine. Experts from The Mayo Clinic suggest going to bed and waking up at the same time each day. And try adding a soothing ritual like a hot bath, relaxing music, reading a good book, or dimming the lights for

quiet meditation. It will help lull you into a deep sleep that will allow you to wake up energized for the next day.

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3. Let the process progress naturally. Although getting seven to nine hours of sleep per night is the popular belief, some of us simply don't need that much sleep. The National Sleep Foundation conducted recent studies that place more emphasis on the way you feel rather than dictating a specific amount of time. "Pay careful attention to your mood, energy, and health after a poor night's sleep versus a good one," experts at Sleep Foundation say. "Ask yourself, 'How often do I get a good night's sleep?' Like good diet and exercise, sleep is a critical component to overall health." The National Sleep Foundation uses a series of questions to measure adequate sleep. For example, after sleeping seven hours, do you feel productive and happy? Are you overweight? Do you rely on caffeine to get you through the day? And do you feel sleepy while driving? The answers may help you better gauge how many hours your body needs to stay healthy.

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4. Give sleep your full attention. If you want to improve your sleep quickly, put down the electronic devices before you go to bed. "The pervasive glow of electronic devices may be an impediment to a good night's sleep," [Washington Post](#) writer Meeri Kim says. The culprit is the blue light emitted by computer and smartphone screens. The physiology behind it stems from the tiny pineal gland in the brain. It releases melatonin a couple of hours before you are ready for bed. However, the blue light of electronic devices prevents the pineal gland from releasing melatonin, which means you don't feel sleepy. And, morning arrives before you've had a chance to get a good night's sleep.

The health risks from a lack of sleep are enough to keep you awake at night. But by catching up on lost sleep, sticking to a routine, gauging how we feel each morning, and unplugging at night, we are on our way to a healthy lifestyle that can lead you to your future sweetheart. And, that's just dreamy!

For more information about and articles by our relationship expert Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, click [here](#).

Relationship Advice: When The Person You Love Suffers From An Anxiety Disorder



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

This time of year is filled with holiday magic and festive gatherings with friends and family. But for many, the holidays ignite staggering levels of anxiety that paralyzes the sufferer with fear. Celebrities such as Emma Stone, Oprah Winfrey, and Jennifer Lawrence have been candid about their struggles with anxiety disorder while balancing public life. The road hasn't been easy. "The first time I had a panic attack, I was sitting at my friend's house, I thought the house was burning down," said Stone. "I called my mom, and she brought me home. For the next year, it just would not stop." How can you create a feeling of normalcy with your partner when the circumstances are far from typical? "For the majority of our residents, the holiday season brings family together and cheerful memories of Christmases past. But for some, this time of year brings on higher levels of anxiety and

depression,” said Mark Hymas, executive director of Copper Ridge Health Care. “We watch for changes in behavior and initiate conversations where we can talk about his or her feelings and find a solution that can best help during this stressful time of year.” If anxiety is a large part of your relationship, here are three pieces of [relationship advice](#) to understand when the person you love suffers from an anxiety disorder.

Relationship Advice For Those Who Know Anxiety Sufferers

1. Their anxiety disorder makes them tired. Some people view their role as they are the one worrying about their loved one’s anxiety and trying to find solutions while their partner sleeps and doesn’t seem to think about it. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. “I still do get terribly nervous, and that’s partly due to the fact I think too much and over-analyze things,” said Amanda Seyfried. Anxiety sufferers think about their situation – a lot. “Anxiety is naturally tiring,” said Ryan Rivera, relationship expert and founder of CalmClinic.com. “Anxiety can essentially cause both low and high levels of fatigue, and leave you feeling incredibly drained.” Rivera added that tiredness is much easier to prevent than it is to stop. “That’s why you need to take steps to start controlling your anxiety better,” he said. “The less intense your anxiety is, the less tired you should feel.” This year, limit your attendance to gatherings that are meaningful or more intimate with close friends and family.

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2. They don’t like being around their anxiety, either. Like most people, anxiety sufferers don’t want to be defined by their anxiety disorder. “If you truly want to be supportive of

someone with anxiety, remind them that you appreciate the individual behind the anxiety,” said contributor Jake Mcspirit. “Recognize that they are more than just their anxiety.” Anxiety sufferers understand that their behavior is irrational, and they feel frustrated by seeing their irrational responses. It doesn’t help to point them out. “What they need is compassion, understanding, and support,” said Mcspirit. “Very rarely do they need advice on how irrational and pointless is their anxiety.”

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3. Partners can be part of the solution. Most partners are unsure of the best way they can offer support to their loved one. Although living with anxiety disorder can be overwhelming, The Anxiety and Depression Association of America encourages partners of those suffering from anxiety disorder to play an active role in treatment. “In one approach, a mental health professional enlists the partner as a co-therapist,” said the ADAA experts. “With training, the partner can assist the patient with homework assigned by the therapist. This might involve accompanying the patient into anxiety-producing situations and providing encouragement to stay in the situation by using anxiety-reduction techniques.” ADAA recommends setting specific goals that challenge the loved one to progress through different levels then be sure to note the progress.

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If someone you love suffers from anxiety disorder, ensure all is truly calm and bright this time of year by recognizing the physical toll these emotions create for your loved one. Take time to understand the frustration behind their responses, and appreciate your role in the solution. With support and encouragement, your partner will share in your joy during what

can be considered one of the most cheerful times of year.

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Relationship Advice: 4 Survival Tips When Bah Humbug Meets Father Christmas During The Holidays



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

With gifts to buy, parties to host, baking by the dozen, holiday travel, and finding decorations that transform our homes into something rivaling the North Pole, it seems we can never get enough money, especially during the holiday season. In the world of celebrities, where [Beyoncé](#) uses \$350,000 worth of Birkin bags as stocking stuffers and Suri Cruise is treated to her own \$24,000 playhouse, it's hard not to get carried away with the Yuletide retail spirit – until your partner disagrees with you. When everything else in your relationship seems solid, how can a holiday spender and grinchy saver find harmony during the holidays? Here's some [relationship advice](#) and dating tips to keep things merry with your partner and your wallet.

Relationship Advice That Will Help You Survive The Holidays

1. As the spender, consider the root of your spending. Here's a pop quiz: Name every present you received last year. It's hard to remember. The point is, the holiday season is the premiere "live-in-the-moment" season. What we think is important at the moment quickly loses its value as time moves on. The one thing that lingers is debt – the gift that keeps on giving. Many of us feel the need to spend as a way to compensate for feeling lonely or inadequate. Perhaps we want to protect our family from negative memories, or we feel guilt and want to make up for it by showering people with gifts. For the rest of us, there is likely nothing sinister about it – we're just bored and love a good deal. But when you place an unhealthy emphasis on things, you miss out on other ways to connect with those you love. "After owning up to what is really going on, the next step is to understand the consequences of your behavior," said relationship expert Neal Frankle, a Huffington Post contributor. "Don't beat yourself up. Just tell the spendthrift part of you to beat it."

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2. As the saver, realize time passes quickly. Balance is the key to finding a happy medium during the holidays. We should never abandon our plans to build financial security, but there are times when it seems right to invest in the moment, especially when it comes to family time. "Over the past decade, an abundance of psychology research has shown that experiences bring people more happiness than do possessions," wrote contributor James Hamblin, which is a lesson for the spender in the house, as well.

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Solo Holiday Season

3. Move the focus to experiences rather than stuff. The saver in the relationship may not appreciate the advantages of owning a portable hot tub, but he or she may be able to recognize the value in a holiday concert, a gathering family and friends for dinner at a favorite location, or a weekend getaway with family. "Some people choose material things over spending money on experiences because they think it will hold greater value. In truth, the appeal of purchasing that item decreases over time and it becomes clutter. But the memories of an experience remain strong." said Justin Hatch, financial expert and founder of Startegy. Such moments together create lasting memories that endure long after the hot tub has stopped working and sits idle. As a compromise, the spender can buy a souvenir to mark the event. "Consider designing a budget for both people," suggested Hatch. "The spender gets a budget for the holidays that will limit spending but still satisfy the need to shop, and the saver will also get a budget that requires a certain amount of spending as a means of staying engaged in the relationship."

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4. Enjoy the moments, but plan for the future. Experts conclude the base of a happy relationship between a spender and a saver comes down to perspective. One lives in the moment while the other focuses on an uncertain future. The key for the holiday season and throughout the year is to find a balance between the influences of the past, present and future plans. "Happiness may stem from a balanced perspective involving looking fondly on the past, enjoying the present and having goals to strive for in the future," wrote the staff at livescience.com, referring to a study conducted by Ryan Howell at San Francisco State University. His research found that a "balanced time perspective" makes people feel more vital, more grateful, and more satisfied with their lives. "If you are too

extreme or rely too much on any one of these perspectives, it becomes detrimental, and you can get into very destructive types of behaviors,” Howell said. “It is best to be balanced in your time perspectives.”

The truth is, a spender will always enjoy shopping and a saver won't. But by understanding the motivation behind the need to shop and adjusting behavior, recognizing the value of time, appreciating the investment in experiences rather than possessions, and finding a balance between spending and saving, your relationship will be ready for the holiday season and a satisfying new year.

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Dating Advice: 4 Reasons Going Outside Your Comfort Zone Is A Good Idea



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

“For great things to happen— get out of your comfort zone,” that is the mantra of famous personalities like Danica Patrick- as she cruises through industry stereotypes to actors like: Charlize Theron and Jared Leto, who made a career out of avant-garde movie roles. Testing the boundaries of convention is the secret sauce for those hungry for change in their lives. But what about breaking out of your comfort zone in relationships? “When it comes to relationships, some feel it

is best to date someone who has the same morals, taste, traditions, and beliefs as them,” wrote relationship expert and contributor Elizabeth Aguirre. “But rest assured it is quite okay to step outside of your comfort zone and explore someone from a different background as a potential partner.” If it’s been two weeks since the date with Mr. McDreamboat, and your texts have gone unanswered– again. Here are four reasons why going outside your comfort zone may be just what you need, and some [dating advice](#) to improve your chances in finding “the one.”

Dating Advice That Will Help You Experience Something New

1. You can reevaluate your “type.” Moving beyond your comfort zone draws attention to the type you typically chase. If those pursuits have proven unsuccessful, this is the time to evaluate why your type isn’t making you truly happy.

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2. You can learn to take chances on other people. Now, don’t be reckless and start pursuing somebody who is clearly a bad influence, but try connecting with someone who breaks the pattern of your dating behavior. If you only date short women, try one that is tall. Have you ever dated a man with facial hair? Perhaps you should date someone with an interesting job or hobby.

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3. You can become more self-aware. Dating outside your comfort zone may want you to change something about yourself or add another quality to your life. “There is something about challenging yourself, and doing something a bit different that gives you confidence, an edge, and a sense of accomplishment that does wonders for your personal growth,” wrote

relationship blogger Monique A. Honaman. A self-examination may not result in a lifelong partner, but it will help you discover things about yourself that add zest to your life.

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4. You can uncover hidden strengths or desires. “I never thought I would want a man who—” you can fill in the blank. The point is, dating outside of your comfort zone forces you to use skills or behavior traits that you haven’t used before, including patience. Exploring new social territory means a possible match may be slow to materialize. Unlike your usual connections where the results are quick, venturing into unknown territory takes time to maneuver, but it could be well worth the wait. The good news is, once you find yourself in a happy, healthy relationship, the skills you developed while venturing beyond your comfort zone will stay with you long after you’ve left the dating scene. “I have seen the difference a good attitude and living a life with purpose can make on an individual’s quality of life,” said Jim Morrison, executive director of Redmond Care and Rehabilitation Center. “So if there’s a secret to living a good life, it’s loving the life you have and making the most of it every day.”

So get out there and experience a different part of life with someone new. With the dating tips provided, you might just end up loving a person you never thought of giving a chance before!

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Relationship Advice: When Your Partner Sings The Blues, It May Be Something More



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Depression is so much more than sadness. And for those who love someone battling depression, the effects are all encompassing. “It’s like this thing that engulfs you,” said legendary music artist Bruce Springsteen in a celebrity interview with *CBS Morning News*. “I got to where I didn’t want to get out of bed,” he said. Springsteen credits his celebrity relationship with wife Patti Scialfa for giving him the motivation to rise above it. “She’d say, ‘You’re going to be OK. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but it’s going to be all right.’” With the following [relationship advice](#), I’ll provide you with tips on recognizing signs of depression and how to support your partner through this troubling time.

Relationship Advice On Coping With Depression

The World Health Organization reported that 350 million people worldwide suffer from depression. It’s the leading cause of disability. To better identify depression, a standardized method was devised by relationship expert, Dr. Carey Gross, and used by psychiatry residents at Massachusetts General Hospital. “These eight neurovegetative symptoms of depression can be easily remembered with the mnemonic SIGECAPS,” wrote Daniel J. Carlat, M.D for the American Academy of Family Physicians.

If you see these signs emerging in your loved one, he or she may be suffering from more than the blues; it could be a sign of depression. Learn to spot the difference with the following relationship advice.

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Sleep Changes: Should your loved one's sleep patterns increase during the day, or if he or she stays up most of the night, this may be an indicator that your loved one is suffering from depression.

Interest: A loss of interest in the hobbies and activities your partner once enjoyed may mean there's an emotional struggle emerging. This isn't about changing interests. Instead, your loved one won't be interested in doing anything at all.

Guilt: This behavior has more to do with feelings of worthlessness, particularly in older couples, where a depressed loved one devalues themselves. "We believe social and emotional health play an important role in maintaining overall physical health," said Shiloh Sorensen, activity director at Parke View Rehabilitation and Care Center. "Positive and supportive social interaction and relationships are important factors in a person's well-being. It's a need people never outgrow."

Energy: A lack of energy coupled with a declining interest in activities is a sign for concern. It could be a matter that your loved one wants to get involved but doesn't have the energy or feels too fatigued to do anything.

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Cognition/Concentration: Life is loaded with its share of distractions, but if your loved one, who once carried a razor

sharp focus when performing tasks, now struggles with concentrating on those things, it's time to talk about it.

Appetite: While an increase in appetite does occur, it's a rapid decline in weight and an interest in eating that indicates possible depression.

Psychomotor: If your man becomes easily agitated, or your girl lacks energy or interest in things she once enjoyed, it's time to talk about how they are feeling.

Suicide: Many people suffering from depression will share signs of their despair. This preoccupation with death compels them to give away valued possessions or talk about life without them around, among other things. If your loved one seems to have given up on the value of life, seek professional help immediately.

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Remember, your loved one didn't request for depression to be a part of your relationship. But, this unwelcome visitor can be controlled with treatment accompanied by the love and support of a committed partner. By seeing the signs and recognizing the onset of depression, you and your partner can change your tune from singing the blues to enjoying an old-fashioned love song.

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Relationship Advice: 6 Ways to Keep Work & Life Demands in Balance



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

How does she do it? You know who I mean. She's the one who makes achievement look easy—and her hair looks great in the process. As women, our relationship with the demands of work and home have been a historically tenuous balance. More often than not, we lose sight of our anticipated goals for the day and end up whipped by daily demands. But it doesn't have to be this way, and we are surrounded by influential women who demonstrate that strength every day. While their personal strategies may differ, the most common game plans for keeping our work and home life in balance include the following six pieces of [relationship advice](#).

Relationship Advice That Will Help You Balance Your Work & Home Life

1. Be the boss of your time. For women whose schedules are often dictated by the needs of others, maintaining control over time is a constant challenge. But it's necessary. Set boundaries establishing clear work and personal times, then enforce it with colleagues and family. Unless it's an emergency, family must recognize that your attention must be focused on work. The same is true with demands from work. In her book, *Year of Yes*, Shonda Rhimes admitted she now signs off her emails with this signature: "Please note: I will not engage in work emails after 7 pm or on weekends. If I am your boss, may I suggest: Put down the phone." If you don't stay

firm on setting clear boundaries, your ability to stay productive in both areas will be compromised.

2. Set priorities. “It’s the person with the passion who get it done,” said writer, director, and producer Autumn McAlpin. Her award-winning film, *Waffle Street*, is based on the true rags to riches tale that follows the life of a financier who loses his job on Wall Street but finds redemption and true friendship as a waiter in a 24-hour diner. Her success as a writer relies on disciplined organization and project management. “And, a lot of phone calls,” McAlpin added. Life will deliver a hearty portion of distractions. Enforcing balance between work and personal demands by setting firm priorities will help you stay focused on your goals. “To this day, I keep a schedule that is almost minute by minute; Grabbing a power nap to facilitate recovery instead of wasting an hour online,” said Olympic gymnast legend Shannon Miller. “Focus on those things that bring you further to your goal each and every day. Every moment counts.”

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3. Focus and avoid multi-tasking. Business philosopher Dr. Stephen R. Covey once said, “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” As tempting as it is to celebrate the art of multitasking, in truth, we are robbing ourselves of achieving excellence in both arenas. Health contributor and relationship expert Amanda MacMillan wrote, “Research shows that it’s not nearly as efficient as we like to believe, and can even be harmful to our health.”

4. Recruit help. “If there’s one thing I’ve learned over my career as an entrepreneur, it’s good things are rarely accomplished alone,” wrote *CorpNet.com* CEO Nellie Akalp. “Success often hinges on getting the right advice or support from the right people.” This could mean finding help with household chores or childcare. Or, it could mean emulating an

admired mentor. Shonda Rhimes is candid about her dependence on Jenny McCarthy, her family's nanny. "I am proud to say that I do not do this alone," Rhimes wrote. Having someone to help you with your duties at home will curb resentment and any potential relationship problems.

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5. Don't forget to play. Having something to look forward to that doesn't include the demands of work or home keeps you motivated to stay on track. "With vacation days left at the end of last year, the principals of my firm encouraged me to take time off between Christmas and New Year's; time they took off as well," wrote Kristine Scotto, director of Strategic Planning. "And when we all arrived back at the start of the year, everyone was fresh, and the vibe of the team was more energetic than I've seen in months." Take a break from the work and home routine. Buy tickets to a concert for date night, spend Saturday morning walking on the beach, visit a temporary exhibit at the museum. Make plans at the beginning of the week, then stick to them.

6. Schedule time for exercise. A healthy diet and regular diet is essential for energy. "Even when we're busy, we make time for the crucial things in life. We eat. We go to the bathroom. We sleep. And yet one of our most crucial needs – exercise – is often the first thing to go when our calendars fill up," wrote Forbes contributor Deborah Jian Lee. Despite her busy schedule, supermodel Cindy Crawford makes fitness a priority every day. "If you stick with it, even if it's just a small amount, it becomes part of your life," she said. Crawford incorporates dance and Pilates into her daily schedule, and she has been known to jump on the trampoline with her kids as a way to get in some exercise.

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Life doesn't guarantee it won't throw interruptions in your path. But by establishing a routine that includes the relationship advice we've provided you: setting boundaries and priorities, focusing on each task, recruiting help, and scheduling time for play and exercise, can offset the imbalance in your work and life schedules and make room for the unexpected joys in your life- both of them.

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Relationship Advice: How to manage your business when you're sleeping with the CFO?



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

When viewers tune into HGTV's *Fixer Uppers* each week, many wonder how TV hosts and real-life [celebrity couple](#) Chip and Joana Gaines manage to balance their personal life and professional careers. When considering the challenges of running a business, you want to surround yourself with people who share your vision and provide a comforting degree of trust. Many entrepreneurs turn to their spouse. Though the number has likely increased, in 2007, the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners reported there were 1.4 million firms "jointly owned and equally operated by a husband and wife." And while the organizational chart for your business venture may appear standard, the fact that a member of the executive board has seen you naked presents a unique set of

challenges and rewards. How can husbands and wives go into business together and still like each other? It's something that my husband, Jeff, and I are managing carefully. Here are four pieces of [relationship advice](#) that have worked for us.

Relationship Advice On Handling Business With Your Significant Other

1. Recognize the difference between business and personal mode. Once you acknowledge that a business is going to dominate the majority of your time, your business will settle into a pattern. Thus, the number one dating tip relationship experts offer is to establish boundaries that honor both a business and personal arena. "Running a business is difficult and stressful enough. Add marriage to it? That's quite the challenge," wrote contributor H. Lerner. "When a couple knows how to turn off the business switch and enjoy their personal lives, they are one step ahead of the game." Once those two worlds emerge, it's up to you and your partner to respect them. My husband and I might be in a heated discussion about something I bought that I didn't run through the "finance department"—then our favorite show comes on, and we move into "married" mode. As difficult as it is, you have to make the mental switch.

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2. Acknowledge that business and personal conversations are going to spill into each other. Things happen. The office manager runs off to Vegas to be an Elvis impersonator, or your teenager returns from soccer camp with a tattoo of Messi on his calf. You're going to have to discuss it ... urgently. "Trying to separate work and family when your work is your

family is pretty much impossible,” wrote contributor Valentina Zarya. She referred to Julia Hartz, CEO of the ticketing site Eventbrite. As a co-founder with her husband Kevin, she admitted she doesn’t even try to separate the two worlds. “We focus on Eventbrite and our family. That’s how we spend our time, full stop. The nature of business today is that the lines of ‘work’ and ‘life’ are a little more blurred.” Zarya added that when you include kids in the mix, things get even more complicated. Admittedly, Jeff and I aren’t very good at this. We can’t always compartmentalize the daily events of our personal or professional lives. But when one of us needs some time and attention on a personal level, we are pretty good about communicating it to each other. And we can also make it work for us. “Ok, let’s discuss business for five minutes so we can expense this dinner,” is commonly heard at our house.

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3. Share the housework... or hire it out. Regardless of whether you’re running a business together, it’s likely that both husband and wife work. Somebody has to mind the store at home, but nobody wants to do it— and for good reason. Work schedules have never been more stressful, and the distinction between public and private life is blurred with the additional flexibility that many businesses offer. If you’re just too busy to do the dishes, it might be time to hire some help. I knew it was time when I came home from work to a dirty house and started blaming Jeff for it— when he had been working all day. While hiring help was expensive, it was cheaper than hiring relationship experts for marriage therapy, and was worth every penny.

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4. Master the bedroom. When it seems as if the major parts of your day are regimented into “to-do” lists and schedules,

there is one area where time and titles shouldn't matter. Your bedroom is a refuge from reality, so use it – a lot. “Appreciate your unique relationship,” wrote David and Carrie McKeegan, writers and co-founders of Greenback Expat Tax Services. “The entrepreneurial lifestyle can be intense and having someone to share it with help make it more manageable but also rewarding – sharing your passion for the business with the one you love can be powerful.”

Running a business with your trusted partner can be an exciting and rewarding experience—or, not. By establishing clear boundaries, relying on loving trust while treating this endeavor as a serious business, and sharing duties while being generous with private time, you can design an exciting future in entrepreneurship without scrapping a promising future with your spouse.

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Relationship Advice: Listen With Your Heart



 By Debbie Ceresa from [Divorce Support Center](#)

How many times have you said this to your partner? “You never hear what I say! Aren't you listening to me?” Or maybe they've accused you of not hearing or remembering what was said. The longtime celebrity couple Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn credit listening as a secret to a successful relationship. “Learn to listen and live in the moment. Don't over plan your future;

focus on being the best partner you can be in the present moment, and the rest will follow.” Listening is key to building and maintaining a healthy relationship, but it’s not easy. The skills of a good listener require dedication and a heart with ears. You must have the ability to give yourself totally to the person who is talking. It’s not easy because we are constantly inundated with outside distractions, such as our thoughts, cell phones, and social media. In his book, *Wherever You Go, There You Are*, Jon Kabat-Zinn, professor of medicine emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, defines mindfulness, or active listening, as paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. We listen to understand, to obtain information, and for enjoyment, but researchers and [relationship experts](#) at the University of Minnesota found that “the average person only remembers half of what he or she has immediately heard said by another person.” Over time, that result can have a devastating effect on your relationships. A key factor in a successful relationship is to become a pro in active listening. Active listeners make an effort to hear what has been said and understand the message. To accomplish this, you must master four of these dating tips.

Relationship Advice On Active Listening

1. Create a listening ritual and space. Find a comfortable place to sit and listen to each other, particularly when the conversation is important. Your special place should be free of distractions thereby giving yourselves total attention to each other. Unplug, de-clutter, shut the door, do whatever it takes for some priceless listening time. My husband and I have created a morning coffee time on our patio. The morning sounds of birds, the tranquility of mountains in the distance, and the early neighborhood sounds provide us with a peaceful space

to share stories daily.

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2. Pay attention. Give yourself to the speaker with a nod of your head, a slight gesture, or smile. Maintaining eye contact demonstrates you are in the moment. Most importantly, try to focus on hearing with your heart. “Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you’d have preferred to talk,” said relationship expert Doug Larson.

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3. Put yourself in your partner’s shoes. Don’t be afraid to be empathic. Recognizing your partner’s perspective will give you the opportunity to think beyond yourself. You’ll be surprised as you discover their hopes, dreams, fears and expectations. These discoveries will lead to you honing in on your listening skills as you begin to know your partner more intimately.

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4. Collect moments and be prepared to retell the story. When your partner shares a story with you, it’s important to them. The story is their moment, and it has now become yours. How many times have you and a friend retold the story of running through the airport together or the time you celebrated your anniversary at a special restaurant? “One of the best ways to remember something better is to know that you are going to tell what you learned to someone else,” said writer Henrik Edberg. “Then you’ll be more alert, naturally start asking more questions to understand and what is said – in my experience – simply seems to stick better.” My best relationship advice is to learn from retelling your special moments, remember the eye contact, gestures, and

emotions. With so many distractions vying for our time, the ability to listen is a quality often longed for in today's relationships. By creating the ideal atmosphere, paying attention, showing empathy for our partner, and being fully engaged in listening, you can show your loved one how much you care by not saying a word.

Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist. She is an author, an inspirational speaker, and a relationship expert. For more information about and articles by our Divorce Support Center relationship experts, click [here](#).

Relationship Advice: True Love or Rebound?



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

It's a familiar scene; we watch a friend wallow in a doomed relationship for a while only to hear him or her declare their true love was found in a brand new relationship. For example, as fans watched multi-platinum recording artist Taylor Swift switch from her [celebrity relationship](#) with Calvin Harris to cozing on the beach with new squeeze Tom Hiddleston, it makes one wonder if this truly was perfect timing for a new love to grow, or simply a rebound relationship? Sometimes it's hard to know for sure. But if your new relationship feels a little too good to be true, here are some dating tips and [relationship advice](#) to determine if you could be somebody's rebound.

Relationship Advice On Rebounding

1. Your partner just got out of a long-term relationship. Following a failed relationship, it's always wise to take some time alone to realign one's goals and evaluate lessons learned from that experience. This time is valuable to ensure you don't make the same mistakes in future relationships. But if you are involved with someone who has recently left a long-term relationship, you need to determine if your new partner was ready to move on, or are you simply filling in as the emotional gap? "If you've met someone you like that recently got out of a relationship, take it slowly," advised relationship expert and blogger Alina. "Even if he or she says they are completely over their ex and have moved on, it is in your best interest to take your time getting to know this person a little more before giving yourself the green light to emotionally dive in."

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2. The relationship is moving at a fast pace. You may have dated for a short time, but the relationship has already escalated to a highly physical and committed relationship. While you are spending every moment together and talking about your future, consider how well you know this person. If this relationship is moving at rocket speed despite the fact you know very little about your partner, you may be the rebound for your partner's crushed heart. "I think I married for the wrong reasons. Instead of following my heart and doing something that made me really happy, I just did it for the idea of everything," said [Britney Spears](#) of her failed marriage to Kevin Federline. She talked about her decision to wed in a 2008 *For the Record* documentary.

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3. The former flame is the third member of your relationship. It's common for people to share stories of old relationships. But if a past love is a common component to your romantic dinners, this could be a sign that he or she hasn't moved on from that former relationship. It's likely you are a vehicle in helping your partner get back with the person they truly want to be with. The staff at *eHarmony.com* offered relationship advice with the following scenario as a warning: "He talks about his ex all the time. He mentions that you look like her, or that your mannerisms or interests remind him of her. He takes you places he once took his ex – and tells you so. If he's still preoccupied with someone else, he's not ready to fully move on."

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4. Friends are surprised your partner is dating again. You and your partner's friends are helpful in determining if the person you're sharing your time with is worthy of that commitment. If you see outsiders shaking their heads at the relationship, it may be a warning sign. The staff at *eHarmony* warn that the new relationship "may be poorly timed and concur that sometimes it's wise to trust the red flags coming from others." Finding someone to share your life with is a gift. But if the foundation for that new relationship is sitting on shaky ground, it is destined to fall.

By being aware of your new love's past, keeping control of the pace, ensuring former partners are out of the picture, and measuring the reactions of others who care about you and your partner, you are lined up to score big on the relationship front rather than being sidelined as a rebound.

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Relationship Advice: 3 Ways To Scratch The Seven-Year Itch



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

If you listen to the relationship experts, the seven-year itch can just as easily be called the three-year itch, four-year itch, or the twelve-year itch. “There’s no consensus among experts as to why the seven-year itch may occur,” explained relationship expert Jennifer Nagy. Experts identify irritating contributors like hasty marriage proposals (Pamela Anderson or Khloe Kardashian), declining interest in his or her’s partner, and growing family responsibilities. But with married couples facing a 50-50 chance at success, it makes one wonder how to extend the rather short shelf life of a marriage, despite the growing needs of maintaining a life together.

Fortunately, society is filled with [celebrity couples](#) who have defied the odds. Will and Jada Pinkett Smith will celebrate twenty years together next year, Bill and Melinda Gates have been married over twenty years, and Billy Crystal and his wife, Janice, have been together forty-six years. If you and your partner are truly committed to making a marriage work, here is my [relationship advice](#) where I provide three ways to scratch that seven-year itch. Follow these dating tips to increase the longevity of your marriage.

Relationship Advice On How To Have A Lasting Marriage

1. Search for the things you first loved about each other. “I just love him more and more,” said Reese Witherspoon about her five-year marriage to Jim Toth. “I want so much for him to be happy, and he wants me to be happy.” Life is filled with distractions that make it difficult for those once-endearing traits to present themselves. Between family, changing interests, and work, we have many things demanding a portion of our time. Remember: You committed to share your life, dreams, and your whole self with this person. Don’t take that promise lightly, and don’t search for perfection—you won’t find it. Instead, uncover the things about your partner that make you feel secure, more focused, and better able to grow and expand your evolving interests as a couple.

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2. Make the private moments meaningful. “For us,” explained Chrissy Teigen about her marriage to John Legend, “it’s exciting to have time away and then be together and make up for that lost time.” As a mature relationship grows, the opportunities to share alone time are few and far between, but the need to find that time becomes so important. “When the sexual intimacy in the marriage can be nurtured and given the time to grow, then the marriage will be successful,” wrote Dawn Michael. “The problem, of course, is that many couples lose the closeness that brought them together in the first place.”

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3. Leaving is not an option. “At our facility, it is not uncommon to see a loving spouse sit with his or her aging partner while illness, dementia, or frailty robs them of

meaningful twilight years together,” said Scott Hanson, executive director of Lake Ridge Senior Living. “Even though the loved one may no longer recognize him, the thought of leaving or loving her any less is simply not an option.” That kind of commitment through good times and bad is what strengthens the bond Gisele Bündchen shares with her husband Tom Brady. “My father always said, the quality of your life depends on the quality of your relationships, and I think, no matter how challenging it was, we’ve always been supportive of one another. I think that’s the most important thing you can have in life.” With the array of circumstances that continually take shots at a relationship, it’s hard to know whether or not a marriage will be strained at any specific time. According to Nagy, “The studies do seem to agree that couples need to put in the extra effort every day in order to sustain happy marriages. If a couple doesn’t prioritize their relationship, their marriage will fall by the wayside – no matter how long they’ve been together.”

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Relationship Advice: Keeping The Fireworks In Your Relationship



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

“I wanna know what love is. I want you to show me.” The rock band Foreigner made that desperate request thirty-two years

ago, and we are still wondering about the answer today. With summer romance in full swing, many are looking for [relationship advice](#) on how they can keep the fireworks flying in a relationship that is worth protecting. A common truth behind some of today's most enduring relationships is that it takes work to keep that spark alive, and these four dating tips will help ensure your love is a total blast.

Relationship Advice On How To Keep The Spark Alive

1. Keep dating. Typically, a secure, committed relationship means we don't have to pay close attention to it, right? Wrong! Relationship experts stress that just the opposite is true. Marriage counselor Michele Weiner-Davis says that many times her clients can't recall the last time they spent any time alone together. "They are just not recognizing that romantic time with one another is what a relationship should be about—it should not just be the icing on the cake," she says.

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2. Stay connected. A healthy relationship needs to be nurtured. That means your significant other needs to be reminded regularly that you are his or her number one fan. By using today's technology, you can drop a message to your main squeeze in any form. Be careful who is on the receiving end, however. [UsMagazine.com](#) reported on Kelly Ripa's experience sending a photo of her toned behind to her husband, Mark Consuelos. Unfortunately, the photo made its way to her in-laws' iPad instead. "My mother and father-in-law respond from their email and they're like, 'Dear Kelly, we are so proud of all your hard work,' she said. 'Your exercise classes are really paying off.'"

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3. Stay interested. When the relationship began, we wanted to know everything about our new love interest. As your relationship continues to progress and evolve, staying curious about what makes your partner tick keeps you both engaged in the relationship. “Romantic profundity embodies frequent acute occurrences of intense love over long periods of time, along with romantic experiences that meaningfully resonate in all dimensions, helping the individuals flourish and thrive in all dimensions of love,” wrote relationship expert Aaron Ben-Zeev, Ph.D. In other words, the best relationship advice to follow is recognizing and celebrating the new, positive discoveries with your partner which will keep things hot in the relationship.

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4. Do whatever it takes. When you have made up your mind that you are committed to this relationship, you will find the little things that often chip away at a marriage won't be a factor in yours. For example, actor Hugh Jackman and his wife, Deborra-Lee Furness, have made a promise to each other not to be apart for more than two weeks at a time. They have been together since 1996. The decision to stay committed early on will be the foundation when difficult times challenge the relationship. Since actor Dax Shepard opened up publicly about his personal struggles with addiction as a result of childhood abuse, his wife, Kristen Bell, has remained supportive of her husband and offers public support to others who live with mental illness and addiction. “Seeing the world through his eyes has really opened mine to knowing that it is a disease, and nobody is choosing to drink more than others. They are doing it because of a variety of reasons, and they deserve the attention of a mental health professional, and not the county jail or however else we're choosing to pretend we're fixing the problem,” says Bell.

The secret dating advice behind a healthy relationship is that there is no secret. But it does require an understanding of what you want in a loving partner and an awareness of what you are willing to share. Then, by investing time in keeping private time a priority, being generous with loving gestures, staying curious about your partner, and being fully committed to the success of the relationship, you are destined for a lasting love that lights up the room.

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Relationship Advice: Have You Been a Victim of Cyber Bullying?



 By Debbie Ceresa for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Typically, I don't spend much time on the computer. However, the past several months have been different. I started experiencing insomnia, fatigue and headaches because I was consumed by the internet when I no longer felt safe. I was outsmarted by a woman that I've known for years. I'll call her Lena. Lena insisted I participate in a group discussion about personal matters, but I declined her meeting. I felt it was not appropriate for me to be involved. Nevertheless, Lena continued to pursue my involvement, claiming I was unsupportive. One day I dialed Lena's number and left a voice mail, explaining why I wouldn't attend the group. Lena asked for me to follow up with a text message, claiming she couldn't hear the recording. Lena forwarded my text message to members

of the very group I declined to attend. The message was used to embarrass, humiliate, and alienate me from her supporters. Rude comments appeared on my Facebook, Twitter, and other social media accounts. Many of these messages were from people I didn't even know. I became a victim of cyberbullying. And sadly, I received only a taste of what cyberbullying is like in the online dating world. Long-term relationship problems can arise as a result of cyberbullying if not properly dealt with. As a relationship expert who has gone through it, I offer my [relationship advice](#) on how to get over cyber bullying.

Relationship Advice On Dealing With Cyber Bullies

What is Cyber Bullying? Cyber bullying is not beyond the realm of adult intellect and responsibility, nor is it limited to young people. The cyberbully uses technology to intentionally mistreat others. Computers, cellphones, and other electronic devices become weapons to cause fear, distress, or harm. But the bully is not driven by revenge alone. According to Violence Prevention Works, "Cyberbullying, like traditional bullying, involves an imbalance of power, aggression, and a negative action that is often repeated." In other words, a cyber bully needs an audience to be fully satisfied and therefore takes the bullying to social media, where humiliation is up for public viewing and twice as shaming.

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Cyber Bullying Can Take Several Forms. According to Violence Prevention, cyber bullying is achieved through these means:

- Offensive, rude, and insulting messages.
- Posted derogatory information, and/or digitally altered

photos.

- Arguing online, often with the use of vulgar language.
- Hacking another's email or social media to post embarrassing material.
- Sharing of secrets to cause embarrassment.
- Repeated threats or online activity that makes a person afraid for his/her safety.

My husband and I were both profoundly affected by this woman's actions. We joined the ranks of other victims and suffered the many emotional and physical symptoms that are common after such an attack.

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How Cyber Bullying Can Affect You. As celebrity news often shows, many of today's stars, such as LeAnn Rimes, Ciara, and Adele can attest the emotional toll of cyberbullying on one's health. A few of the psychological health conditions that are brought on by bullying include stress, low self-esteem, depression, mood swings, fatigue, embarrassment and feelings of shame. Your physical health can also suffer with reduced immunity to infection, stress headaches, elevated blood pressure and post-traumatic stress disorder. Lena's assault forced my husband and I to escape to our private little island to cope with the pain and grief caused by the loss of trust and expectations from this woman. Like so many grieverers, we were embarrassed, ashamed, and depressed. The unrealistic expectations of this woman awakened my skills as a relationship expert and helped me uncover necessary tools to address my unresolved grief and negative feelings.

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Have You Been A Victim of a Cyber Bully? Here is some relationship advice to help you cope: Your first step is to

acknowledge that you need to take care of yourself. If you are experiencing many of the same symptoms—don't ignore them. Your pain and the side effects of the attack are not going to go away by themselves. Don't fall into the trap of developing a lifelong relationship with your pain. You were a victim, but don't hang around waiting for the cyber bully to apologize like I did. It's not going to happen. I never received an apology. Understand that you need to forgive, not condone. To forgive means to cease feeling resentment against an offender. To condone is to treat as if trivial, harmless, or of no importance. Forgiveness is not condoning the situation. How do you forgive the cyber bully? NOT directly! Here's what I finally told myself: "I acknowledge that the things you did or did not do, hurt me, and I'm not going to let my memory of those incidents hurt ME anymore."

Don't be embarrassed, ashamed, or depressed about your grief. It's more exhausting to stay on the pain island than it is to admit you are filled with grief. In the long run, I must thank the cyber bully for showing me the path to helping others. I'm now confident I can be a lifeline to many by offering relationship advice.

Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® and the author to the #1 bestselling memoir A Beautiful View, available on amazon.com. A Beautiful View documents her journey through her husband's battle with cancer, which ultimately ended with his death. She has experienced grief firsthand and is well equipped to aid others in the recovery process, whether with death or divorce. For more information about Debbie and how to recover from your loss, please visit debbieceresa.com.

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Relationship Advice: The Power of Touch



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

A dim room, calming oils, quiet music, two masseuses, you, your significant other, and a few hours away from the world: A couples massage sounds hard to beat. While couples massages are known for being a relaxing and romantic date idea, have you ever considered the real health advantages of them? It turns out the power of touch plays a very important role in massage therapy and health. Follow my [relationship advice](#) and learn how a couples massage can provide you and your love with real health benefits that can ultimately strengthen your relationship.

Relationship Advice: Strengthen Your Relationship Through A Couple's Massage

1. Physical touch. Physical touch is a vital part of any relationship. "Touch is important for sustaining a healthy relationship, but it's also necessary for our feelings of connection, safety and overall well-being," says Dr. Justin R. Garcia, Associate Director for Research and Education at The Kinsey Institute. Receiving a couples massage with your partner will not only satisfy a need for physical touch but also remind you both of the need for physical touch in your relationship. As a relationship expert, I always hear about

couples who have been together for a long time, perhaps growing out of the stage of passionate love to companion love who tend to touch less. A couples massage presents an opportunity for you both to feel a renewed sense of satisfaction and peace. You can pick up on a few massage techniques to use on each other at home. Relationship advice: Take time to make touch a priority so you can become closer as a couple and give you both a greater sense of love and security.

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2. An anxiety reliever. Every relationship goes through tough times, whether caused by a difficult life event or lack of communication. A couples massage can help alleviate some of this stress and anxiety. Regular massages can decrease cortisol while increasing frontal delta brainwaves, causing you to feel more relaxed. After a couples massage, you and your partner will not only feel less stressed but will also handle challenges better. Releasing anxious feelings together can bring you closer and set the tone for a better week.

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3. Improved overall health. A healthy couple is a happy couple. Massage provides a variety of overall physical health benefits, including heart health. "Studies show massage therapy can immediately lower blood pressure, decrease heart disease risk, and improve circulation," said Dr. Candice Hall, D.C., an expert in Functional Medicine with Next Advanced Medicine. "We often use massage therapy to help our patients control anxiety and common digestive disorders." If you and your partner are looking for ways to become healthier together, this is the perfect solution. Another added health benefit of a couples massage is how well it accompanies chiropractic care. Whether you or your partner have chronic back pain or are just in need of some TLC, massages can be a

great way to get the most out of your chiropractic appointments. While a chiropractor can adjust your joints, massage therapy can help relieve stiffness and discomfort. If your loved one is suffering from back or joint pain, offering a couples massage is a great way to show you care. When you both feel good, you're less likely to be irritable and more able to enjoy spending time together.

A dating tip for this weekend? Surprise your significant other with a couples massage and you'll not only enjoy spending quality time together but could leave feeling healthier and more relaxed than ever.

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Relationship Advice: Managing Your Adult Child's Return To The Nest



 By Toni Coleman, LCSW, CMC for [Divorce Support Center](#)

It's that time of the year when young adults are graduating from college, returning home for the summer break, or have decided they want to step back from their lives and return to their parent's home to rethink their options and future direction. During their absence parents often have a nice rhythm going and fear their life and relationship may be upended and they will end up back in parenting mode now that their adult kids will be under their roof again. If you are

facing this challenge right now, the following [relationship advice](#) and parenting advice could help you transition to this new adult-to-adult relationship and avoid falling back into old ruts, conflicts, or dysfunctional dynamics.

Relationship Advice On Managing Your Child's Return Home

1. Start with an open and frank discussion. As the custody battle between [Madonna and ex-husband Guy Ritchie](#) concerning their teenaged son, Rocco, rages on, their circumstance illustrates this relationship advice that you need to be upfront that this is your house, and you will have the final say on what is acceptable and appropriate. Your child is being given permission to live with you, and they will need to adapt to your way of doing things and not the other way around. This does not necessarily mean they will have no input or say or that there will be no room for negotiation around differences. It just means that after talking everything through together, and hearing them out—you will make the final determination on any issue in dispute. In order to avoid relationship problems, you need to be clear that their acceptance of this is a contingency of their living with you.

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2. List your expectations upfront. This is how we handle relationships with peers, isn't it? Therefore, when you speak directly and candidly with your adult child, you are saying that you see them as a peer now and will treat him with the same expectations as you would any other adult. Expectations regarding the handling of household chores, finances, shopping, cooking, and the usage of common space should be aired with the goal of reaching a firm agreement on each. Anything that is shared by or impacts all members of the

household would apply here.

3. Discuss boundaries and any rules you want in place. As a relationship expert, I know that boundaries are necessary and important to healthy relationships. Within all households, there are subset relationships—such as parents, children, children and significant others, and any extended family that may be members of the household. Each subset needs to have a boundary around it that distinguishes it from the others. When your young adult comes home, they will need to respect your couple time and privacy, and you will need to acknowledge and respect theirs. If they have a significant other who visits, establishing rules for where and when they will interact in your home will be important to your privacy and theirs, and if not addressed, disharmony and resentment can flourish. If you are concerned about late night noise and arrivals home, it may be necessary to establish a curfew if these disruptions can't be handled in another way.

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4. Don't forget they are adults and need to be treated as such. Don't treat your young adult like you would a minor child or younger teenager. This includes how you speak to them, avoiding attempts to control or dictate their behavior, or making threats about what you will do if they don't comply with your expectations/rules. Instead, present your expectations and any rules in a direct and non-confronting manner. Remind them that it is their choice to live under your roof and that your expectations are a part of that decision and that they are free to change their mind at any time.

Remember that the adjustment to returning home will be as much of a challenge for your adult child as it is for you. Therefore, it is important to remain focused on their feelings and needs along with your own. After all, you put a lot of effort and care into raising them and want them to be well-adjusted and competent adults, right? Helping them to handle

this important step towards adulthood may be the last hurdle and one that if handled successfully could pay great dividends for all of you down the road.

[Toni Coleman](#), LCSW, CMC is an internationally known psychotherapist, relationship coach, and founder of consummate relationship coaching. As a recognized expert, Ms. Coleman is the featured relationship coach in The Business and Practice of Coaching, (Norton, September 2005.) In addition, she authored the forward for Winning Points with the Woman in your Life, One Touchdown at a Time, (Simon and Schuster, November 2005.) among many other achievements.

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Dating Advice: Gifts For the Heart



 By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Most would agree that Seattle Seahawks Quarterback Russell Wilson is the picture of good health. When paired up with his beautiful fiancée, Ciara, they are the image of a healthy celebrity couple. Finding the perfect gift to celebrate your loved one, however, never gets any easier, even for famous couples. Do you go with chocolates or flowers? How about a fancy dinner? When you do find the perfect token of love, it will most likely cost you a pretty penny to celebrate your beautiful mate. With summer love heating up, my [dating advice](#) is to make your heart the focus of your enduring love. Here

are five ideas that stem from the heart – for the heart.

Dating Advice: Making Your Heart The Focus of Your Relationship

1. Adopt a heart healthy diet as a couple. By incorporating fresh fruit and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and limiting your fat intake, you are taking healthy steps toward a loving and lasting relationship. According to the Mayo Clinic, “Limiting how much saturated and trans fats you eat is an important step to reduce your blood cholesterol and lower your risk of coronary artery disease.” My dating advice is to put your heart where your mouth is and make healthy food choices that will create long-term benefits for you and your loved one.

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2. Exercise for Deux. “If you don’t make time for walking together, you’ll never work it into your busy days,” warned relationship expert Sheri Stritof. We all can benefit from daily exercise. A great way to stay motivated to exercise daily is to share your exercise routine with your sweetheart. Creating a daily walking ritual with your loved one is a great exercise for your heart, and the emotional connection that can come from daily conversations is good for the soul.

3. Learn CPR. According to the American Heart Association, sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in adults. When an individual is able to start CPR, the survival rate increases to over 40 percent. By contrast, each minute that treatment is delayed, the chance of your loved one surviving reduces by 10 percent. For information on CPR training, you can contact your local branch of the American Red Cross, or you can contact city hall for information on community courses. By learning CPR, you just may give the best gift of

all to those you love—the gift of life.

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4. Follow up on physical exams. Both males and females are encouraged to undergo physical exams every year. Experts agree a key to overall good health is prevention. One way to prevent disease is to build a comprehensive medical history. Early detection of common diseases is a strong defense should disease occur. According to Health Contributor Treacy Colbert, we should have cholesterol checked every five years, blood pressure checked every two years, and mammograms and cancer screenings every year. While you are focusing on your internal health, don't forget your cover. Colbert reported that the rates of melanoma continued to climb in the United States despite increased awareness of the dangers of skin cancer. "Check your skin every month for moles that have changed or look abnormal," wrote Colbert. "You should also look out for sores that won't heal. Have your doctor check your skin thoroughly as part of your physical— melanoma is highly curable when diagnosed early."

5. Share expressions of gratitude. For the United Health Group, good health is more than just measuring pressures or pounds: "It means taking an integrated approach to well-being that includes not only our physical health but our emotional health, our sense of purpose, our connections to our community and our overall quality of life." Experts say when you vocalize positive phrases and express appreciation to your loved one, it has a positive impact on your health as well as the mental well-being of your loved one. You will always avoid a few relationship problems. So share your feelings about your sweetheart. Tell him how much he means to you.

When you find someone you want to spend the rest of your life with, why not share gifts that are meant to last as long as your love for that person endures? With gifts such as a better

diet, exercise, learning CPR, physical exams and phrases of gratitude, your gifts from the heart can be good for your heart. I “heart” that idea.

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Dating Advice: Spring Cleaning For The Soul



 By J'Nel Wright for [Divorce Support Center](#)

The last trace of snow has finally melted as we transition from winter to spring. For many, the realization that spring is officially in the air symbolizes the end of a long, dark winter filled with unrealized goals, baggage left over from the holidays, and the end of winter blues. Take my [dating advice](#): This is the perfect time to shake out the dust and shadows trapped in our minds and bodies and welcome renewal. The process of reinventing ourselves isn't a new concept. Many celebrities have transformed themselves in ways that reinforce their place in the annals of super-stardom. Jamie Foxx could have remained a one-act comedian – he is certainly funny enough. Instead, he reinvented himself as a musician and an actor and emerged triumphant in both areas. We can enjoy that same sense of renewal in our lives.

Dating Advice: Spring Into Action

This Season

1. Get off the couch. Your New Year's Resolutions may have bit the dust a long time ago, but it's never too late to reignite an exercise routine. Spring is the perfect time to explore different exercise routines or experiment with new gear. "Short-term goals will help you make physical activity a regular part of your daily life," reported The National Institute on Aging as part of their Go4Life campaign. "For these goals, think about the things you need to get or do to be physically active. For example, you may need to buy appropriate fitness clothes or walking shoes. Make sure your short-term goals will really help you be more active."

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2. Toss out the negative thoughts. This spring season is the perfect time to throw out the self-criticism and negativity you've been carrying around all winter long. Are you still haunted by the offhanded remarks from the last family gathering or the critical comments from a co-worker? Maybe your significant other wasn't as supportive as you needed him to be during a stressful time. Chances are, you are giving those remarks more thought than they are. You know your capabilities as an employee, and you know you are a good person, so it's time to shake the negative remarks out of your head and move on.

3. Throw out the critical relationships. Much like we sort through the clothing that no longer fits or feels comfortable, the same sorting process can be used to sift through the relationships that no longer benefit us. "It could be that you've grown apart and don't share the same goals and values," wrote relationship expert Debra Rogers. "Or you've both simply become unhappy. If you're wondering where you're headed, it's straight to no-where-ville. Sail to a new shore and find a

better man for you.” If you’re having relationship problems and growing tired of defending your actions, enduring unfair criticism or playing down your accomplishments for the sake of sparing the feelings of an insecure friend or partner, it’s time to clean out your contact list. You need people in your life who will support you, celebrate you, and make you feel good about yourself. My dating advice? Try signing up for help from a professional matchmaker to help you through this process.

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: How Your Relationships And Love Impact Your New Year’s Resolutions](#)

4. Sort through personal goals. Spring is the ideal time to refocus on lost goals or eliminate self-defeating habits. Do you still procrastinate? Is the novel you have been working on since college still gathering dust on the shelf? Perhaps now is the time to start eliminating personal debt or build up a savings fund for an upcoming trip. The key is to try new things and embrace new challenges that help us grow. “You probably don’t think about how bad habits sabotage your life in so many areas. Many of those habits are things that you waste time doing that cause you to lose sight of the big picture and become consumed with whatever is right in front of you,” wrote Dr. Michelle Callahan, a psychologist and author. This is the time to recommit to those goals and reinvent ourselves.

By committing to a daily exercise routine, eliminating negative thoughts, people, and other destructive baggage from our lives, and renewing our focus on personal goals, we are ready to “spring” into action with a new determination to make a fresh start in renewing our best selves.

[J’Nel Wright](#) is a lifestyle writer who dabbles in relationships and wellness. Her writing has appeared in both regional and national publications addressing a variety of topics ranging from human interest and literature to business,

interpersonal behavior, and health issues.

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