

# 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](http://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 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.

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# Relationship Advice: Things A Nurse Will Tell You But Your Friends Won't



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

What do actresses Bonnie Hunt, Julie Walters, and recording artists Paul Brandt and Tina Turner have in common? They were all trained as nurses! In honor of the “Year of the Healthy Nurse,” now is a great time to recognize the role nurses play in our lives. The demands placed on nurses every day are huge. Our nurses are committed to providing the best care possible, and they try their hardest to meet that challenge every day. And sometimes that commitment means being brutally honest about a patient’s symptoms or habits. Your friends may not tell you that your moodiness has hung around for weeks, or your jeans are fitting a bit tight – but a nurse will tell you. In the spirit of good health and valuable [relationship advice](#), here are five things your nurse is willing to discuss that your friends aren’t.

# Relationship Advice That Come Straight From Nurses

**1. Weight gain.** Despite your friends insisting they can't see a difference in your waistline, your nurse on the other hand will likely confirm your biggest fears – yep, you have gained weight. If you have been diligent about exercise and diet, your nurse will discuss the possible reasons behind the weight gain. Things to consider may be your medications or your thyroid. A nurse may also discuss your sleep patterns or your ability to cope with stress. Putting a stop to unhealthy weight gain in the early stages will make you feel better sooner. Not to mention, your nurse probably has an arsenal of [fitness secrets](#) that can help you get in shape and ready for the dating scene.

**2. Skin symptoms.** Your friends may discount your less-than-glowing skin, but a nurse will explore the reasons why your skin is less than luxurious. Who couldn't use helpful [beauty tips](#) from someone who actually studied medicine? "A helpful acronym to remember the specific questions to ask patients when taking a skin history is 'OLD CARTS,' which gives a systematic approach to questioning in a skin assessment," health writer [Julie Van Onselen](#) says. This includes onset, location, duration, character, aggravating factors, relieving factors, timing, and severity.

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**3. Mood swings.** You may not realize it, but a nurse assesses mental status during your physical. "The mental status assessment is an essential part of the examination," experts at the [Nurses Learning Network](#) say. In general terms, mental status could be described as an individual's state of awareness and responsiveness to the environment. It also

includes the more complex areas of a person's mental functioning, such as intelligence, orientation, thought process and judgment. Your friends may steer clear of the neighborhood grouchy pants, but a nurse will face your behavior head-on to determine the root of your negative feelings and [relationship problems](#).

**4. Lack of exercise and poor diet.** We may try to lie about our daily habits, but our vitals will always paint another picture. Unlike a friend who may look the other way, a nurse will know the truth about how many times we hit the treadmill versus how many sets of pants are draped over it at the moment. "It is so important for patients to be truthful about their daily habits. When patients try to hide their smoking or drug and alcohol use, for example, it prevents us from providing the best care to fit their needs," Julie Aiken, CEO of Ameritech College of Healthcare, said. "Another thing patients don't think about is the importance of mentioning any dietary supplements or over-the-counter medications that they're taking along with prescribed medications. Doctors need a comprehensive view of a patient's health history to design the ideal treatment plan.

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**5. Address your stress.** Stress kills. And as much as you may try to hide it, the effects of prolonged stress can affect your physical well-being. Nurses know a thing or two about controlling stress; it's a large part of the job. So when the topic of stress comes out in the open, a nurse may prescribe a variety of helpful remedies. Things like taking a walk, reading, soaking in a hot bath, talking with friends, or crocheting, are popular ways for nurses to deal with stress. Many nurses have also found a healthy connection with yoga, meditation, and other relaxation exercises. "We bring in a massage therapist for staff every few weeks where they can receive a 15-minute neck and upper back massage," said Julie Aiken, CEO of [Ameritech College of Healthcare](#). She added that

faculty and staff could participate in weekly yoga sessions, daily group walks, and both students and staff are encouraged to use essential oils to help with stress relief.

We love our trusted friends, and we count on them to support us when we need it most. But when it comes to our health, and sometimes even relationship advice, the dedication of our nurses is something we can truly count on to keep us healthy every day.

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## **Relationship Advice: 3 Ways Bad Credit Can Ruin Your Love Life**





By [Dr. Amy Osmond Cook](#)

Congratulations on your new relationship! It's an exciting time to join two lives together to build a bright future. You brought the pets and furniture while your partner brought along a big screen television—and bad credit history. Is this union doomed from the start? Not always. But the road to repair can be rocky. A bad credit history can be fixed, but it takes time, patience, honesty, and a lot of self-discipline to change the habits that got you in this financial situation in the first place. If you want to avoid [relationship problems](#) and change your spending habits, here are three ways bad credit can impact your love life. With the following [relationship advice](#) and [dating tips](#), you can prevent heart ache and an empty wallet.

**Relationship advice that history is wrecking your love life with the**



# following relationship advice.

**1. Deception invades your relationship.** It's one thing to hide the department store shopping bags from your loved one or screen calls from creditors, but when your spending habits cause you to lie about how you are handling your financial responsibilities, it's time to make some changes—fast! “The best healthy financial habit you can make is to develop and maintain a good credit history,” Anthony Bell, a financial expert and blogger from [rescu.com.au](http://rescu.com.au) says. “The best way to do this is to spend less than you earn and budget your expenses so that you know what you can afford, what you need to repay, and by when.” It's solid and simple advice.

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**2. Bad credit makes it hard to move forward with goals.** It's hard to move forward with your goals when you face financial barriers. Think about the natural progression of a relationship; Those plans often include buying a home, a car, or other big-ticket conveniences. But when you bring a bad credit history into the relationship, those goals will either not be possible, or you will face high-interest rates in the purchase. Keep in mind, moving forward with goals isn't impossible, but it will take discipline and determination to achieve them.

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**3. Bad credit destroys your self-confidence.** Nobody enjoys rejection. Hearing “no” can ruin the mood of the most optimistic of people. Just imagine being denied day after day. In that case, even the most basic consumer decisions become an issue when you are denied a cell phone, a gas card, a new bank account, or even an apartment. Such negativity can take its

toll on your self-worth and your relationship. “Partners should treat this as another relationship goal to solve together rather than letting it drive them apart,” Elle Kaplan, [relationship expert](#) and financial advisor says. “Both partners’ debts and credit scores are now tied together for the long run.” In other words, this requires a new attitude concerning money.

The good news is that you can repair your poor credit. Start by requesting a credit report, looking for possible errors, learning your credit score, and discussing financial strategies with an expert, such as [Lexington Law](#) or [CreditRepair.com](#). As you move from this moment on—make sure you are moving toward a life of happiness and financial health.

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## **Relationship Advice: Our Connection With Sleep**





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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](#) 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!

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# 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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## **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.

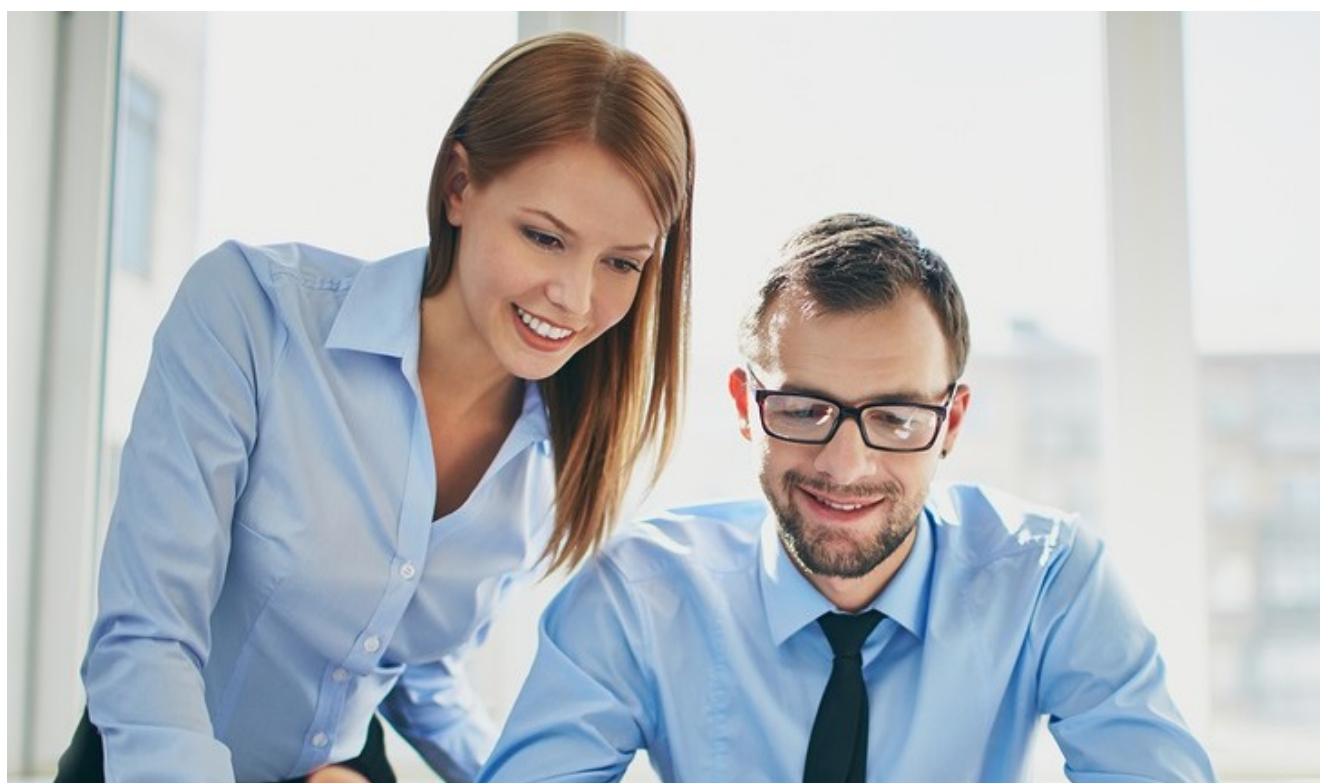
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Life doesn't guarantee it won't throw interruptions in your path. But by establishing a routine that includes the relationship advice we've provided you: setting boundaries and priorities, focusing on each task, recruiting help, and scheduling time 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.

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# 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 cozying 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 grievors, 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](http://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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**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.

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**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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## **Relationship Advice: Telltale Signs Your Relationship Is One of Convenience**



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

Relationships and marriages differ in many ways. What works for one couple would not be right for another. Therefore, there isn't one specific set of attributes or descriptors that could be used in a premarital checklist designed to ensure any marriage will be a successful one. However, there are certain traits that are commonly found in relationships that couples describe as happy and satisfying. These often have to do with specific dynamics and qualities that impact how they relate and communicate from day to day. When these are absent or lacking in some way, it can point to a union that continues due to convenience rather than emotional, spiritual, and physical attachment. Here's some [relationship advice](#) that will help you classify your relationship as convenient or sent from Cupid.

## **Expert Relationship Advice On How To Tell If You're In A Relationship Out Of Convenience**

**1. You decided to marry because of your age, a desire for children, and/or social pressure to do so.** People get married for many different reasons that can include peer or family pressure, age, a desire for children, practical concerns involving money and lifestyle, and/or a fear of being alone or never finding someone as good as one's partner. All of these are more about convenience than emotional attachment and love—even though both can be and are present in many relationships. If relationship problems, such as missing emotional attachment exist, couples often find that over time they feel restless, unfulfilled, and bored. These are major contributors to increasing alienation and emotional and physical infidelity because they may seek to meet their emotional needs outside of the relationship.

**2. Your daily lives are more parallel than intertwined.** This



is when two people live essentially as roommates—sharing household responsibilities and interacting when needs or issues arise that require them to do so. As a relationship expert, I see that these couples may share coffee or the occasional meal, attend social and other events together, but they function as individuals rather than as a unit, lacking the cohesiveness and intimacy that is enjoyed by those with an intimate connection.

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**3. Your conversations consist of topics related to scheduling, household coordination and or issues with finances, future planning and the children.** When all of your conversations are pragmatic and skin deep, there is something missing. It's that tone in your partner's voice, the sharing of feelings and desires, those discussions about nothing or everything during which you feel close and connected.

**4. You value the material and social benefits of your marriage over the relationship itself.** If someone were to ask you why you like being married, what would you say? Would your thoughts immediately go to your home, material possessions, nice vacations, social status, friend group, household help, financial security, and/or the ability to choose work over staying home? If so, the glue that holds you together may be one of practicality and security, rather than emotional and physical affection and attachment.

**5. You seek out others to meet your needs for friendship and companionship.** Do you feel lonely at home? Do you actively seek out friendship with others because you and your spouse don't share this? Do you hate date nights? Are double or group dates the only ones you go on? Marriage to the wrong person can be very lonely, even lonelier than being single, as many singles have strong social networks that sustain them and help meet their needs. However, if your marriage is more of an

arrangement, you will be spending most of your free time with someone you feel little in common with and/or have little or no desire to interact with.

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**6. Sex is rare or non-existent, and you see it as your duty.** Everyone's sex drive ebbs and flows over the course of a long-term relationship. We can't sustain the initial excitement and highs we experienced when it was new, nor should we expect to. However, when we have an emotional connection with someone there is a desire for closeness, touch, and yes, sex. We also want to meet that other person's intimacy needs and therefore it doesn't feel like a chore. If it does, something critical is missing.

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**7. A slippery slope—using alcohol to escape.** If you feel the need to numb yourself, find ways to get distance, and/or use alcohol or other substances to escape your day to day reality—your relationship is in trouble. When we feel connected to our partner we seek more closeness. The sound of their voice, that feeling we have when they walk in the room, that little thrill we feel when they reach out and offer a hug or a caress are all signs that a relationship is strong and that the intimate connection is there.

If the above signs resonate with you—you have a choice to make. You can choose to continue in a union that satisfies your needs for comfort, predictability and security; or you can ask your partner to sit down with you and have that long overdue talk about how you are both feeling and how the relationship is or is not meeting your intimacy needs. This conversation would be an ice breaker and only the beginning of more discussion about what each of you wants that you aren't

getting from one another and from your relationship. From there, my relationship advice is to establish goals and identify resources to help you work and grow together as a team. This would require a willingness to be open and vulnerable, and seeking out professional help may be essential to helping you get and stay on track. Success will rest on the strength of your joint commitment and ability to make the relationship one of your top priorities.

*[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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## **Relationship Advice: What NOT To Do When You're Upset With Your Partner's Weight**





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

What do celebrities like [Oprah Winfrey](#), [Britney Spears](#), [Mariah Carey](#) and [Christina Aguilera](#) have in common? They are all beautiful, talented women who have faced public scrutiny as they struggled with their weight. As people age, many struggle with their weight. It seems that between the stress, lack of time and energy, competing work and family demands, poor food choices and eating on the run, a healthy lifestyle often ends up at or near the bottom of many people's priority lists. This behavior can then be exacerbated when significant others, family and/or friends attribute the problem to the individual's apathy, lack of motivation or discipline, or an unwillingness or inability to make better choices. All of these assume something negative—which is not only unhelpful, it often leads to a continuing downward spiral. If your partner is not taking care of himself or herself, you may have fallen into using one or more of the following counterproductive strategies. If so, it is time to find positive and healthy ways to offer the support and encouragement your partner needs especially from you with a little [relationship advice](#)!

# Relationship Advice: What Not To Do About Your Partner's Weight

**1. Telling them how great they would look if they were thinner.** When someone is carrying too much weight, they are well aware of it. In fact many people, especially women, feel badly about themselves because of it. It isn't useful for them to hear how much better they would look without those extra 20 pounds; it only makes them feel worse as it reminds them that you are very aware and thinking about it. Even though this might seem counterintuitive, what you should do instead is offer compliments on their hair, outfit, how hot they look at that moment, or anything about their appearance that you find attractive. By doing so, you will help lift their spirits and sense of self, and offer them something positive to focus on, which will encourage and support them in taking their next steps towards a healthier lifestyle and weight.

**2. Making 'useful' suggestions for what, when, and how much they should eat.** "Useful" suggestions are often badly veiled attempts to control and manipulate someone's behavior. They can lead to a dynamic where one partner nags the other with their constant stream of suggestions, which then leads to feelings of anger and resentment that get expressed through their partner acting out, usually in the form of eating more of the unhealthiest food they can find. Dating tip: What you should do instead is be a good role model for your spouse. As a relationship expert, I think that you should make good choices for yourself in what and how much you eat. You can suggest (not push or insist) a date night where you do some meal planning, shopping and cooking together, while remaining open to their input and suggestions. Cooking several meals a week at home is a great start, as you will be eating healthier because the meals are made from fresh, whole ingredients. Taking good care of yourself will result in a happier, healthier, and more attractive you—this is what your partner

will notice and want for himself or herself.

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**3. Signing them up for a gym membership when they didn't request one.** It's likely they will repay your investment of money and effort by never using it. No one likes to be managed or to feel coerced or guilt-tripped into anything. The result is that it kills all motivation instead of encouraging it. If you enjoy working out—go to the gym or participate in a physical activity or sport. Definitely ask your partner if they would like to join you for a walk, a hike, to walk the dog, or any activity that you do that you would enjoy sharing with them. If they do express an interest in taking a class or joining a gym, ask them if they would like company. When we have a buddy, we are more likely to follow through and it is more fun. The key here is to listen to them and let them initiate, then you can jump in with an offer of support and companionship.

**4. Commenting on how good someone looks since they lost all that weight.** Adolescents sometimes do this in order to get someone to act out of jealousy; teachers of young children also use this as a way to motivate their other students to do the same and earn some of that praise. But feelings of jealousy, competitiveness, and/or insecurity are not effective motivators for adults who want to make lasting behavior changes. All this does is pile on their already present feelings of insecurity and self-disgust, which leaves them feeling less lovable and more unworthy of their relationship. When you are having a down day and don't feel good about yourself, do you find your motivation and enthusiasm to be higher than when you are having a good day? I didn't think so. A simple way to keep these kinds of comments in check is to ask yourself how you would feel if your partner used the same approach in their attempt to motivate you into action.

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**5. Bringing home their “trigger foods” because they aren’t a problem for you.** Here’s another instance in which it is useful to ask yourself how you would feel if you could not consume something due to a medical or other condition, yet your partner frequently brought it home and consumed it in front of you. It would probably feel as though they were unconcerned or unaware of your feelings. You would also be confronted with more temptation, which could lead to feelings of deprivation and resentment. If this were the case how might you act? Would you sneak the food when your partner wasn’t looking? Would you seethe quietly and want to find some other way to act out, or just withdraw and feel worse about yourself? Whatever your response, it’s likely it would be a negative one. Therefore, loving and concerned partners need to be aware of how their behavior can impact their spouse and then be willing to make adjustments to help create a more supportive and helpful environment. After all, if a partner can stick with their goal and make those necessary lifestyle changes, it’s a win-win.

**6. Sending mixed messages by voicing concern, then encouraging noncompliance.** This is a classic scenario where a spouse who is upset about their partner’s weight or alcohol consumption places them in situations that lead to them consuming unhealthy food, overeating, and/or drinking to excess. It’s as though the partner sends a strong message to them to maintain discipline and healthy habits, then sets them up by insisting they join them in activities with people and in places that will surely sabotage their efforts. When this happens, some partners even say things like, “it’s okay this one time,” or “you are not as much fun as you used to be,” when their partner is trying to abstain from certain food or drink. A driving factor behind this scenario is that the partner doesn’t want to be deprived just because their significant other has an issue. They want them to deal with their issue,

but not if it means they have to sacrifice something as well. Could this be you?

**7. Withdrawing affection and sex because you are angry at their weight gain.** Negative reinforcement rarely works. It has been demonstrated repeatedly to be an ineffective motivator. If you withdraw your affection, it will lead to them feeling unattractive and unlovable, which often leads to a sense of hopelessness and despair. My relationship advice is to stay engaged, show affection, offer positive and caring feedback, and remind them of all the ways they are special and important to you. This will help to energize and motivate them to do more and do it better. A belief in one's own abilities encourages us to reach beyond our fears in pursuit of our goals.

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If your partner is struggling with an unhealthy lifestyle and carrying extra weight, a loving and supportive environment will be important if they are to make any significant and lasting changes. The tone you set, the words you choose and the attitude you take towards them will play an important role in their success or failure. You cannot do it for them, nor can you threaten, cajole, intimidate, or guilt-trip them into being who you think they should be. They have to want it and work for it. But having you as their partner in success, celebrating their good choices and big steps along the way will help ensure they never feel alone.

**Have a tip for how you and your partner powered through weight struggles together? Share in the comments below!**

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# Expert Dating Advice: What is Love & How Do I Find It?



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

Have you ever wondered how [Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson](#) make their celebrity marriage work? How about [Sarah Michelle Gellar and Freddie Prinze Jr.](#)? You're not alone. Most singles wonder if they should wait for that magical attraction to happen. In our quest to solve this mystery, we often turn to expert [dating advice](#). We Google. We write, and we do research. However, the question remains: **What is love?** The question was even the hottest search phrase on Google in 2014.

Musicians have also ventured into love's mystery. John Lennon and Paul McCartney attempted to provide us with an answer with "All We Need Is Love." The lyrics say, "Love is everything." However, we are still searching for the answer to this elusive question. Is it because, if you don't have love, you have nothing? The prospect of nothing is a little scary.

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The ancient Greek philosophers broke down the word *love* into six categories: *Philia*, the deep bond between family and close friends; *Ludus*, the playful affection when flirting or joking around; *Pragma*, mature love found with couples who have been together a long time; *Eros*, our sexual desire and passion; *Agape*, one's love for humanity; and lastly, *Philautia*, the love we have for ourselves. You're lucky if you have all six. Some of us may only have one or two.

**But maybe, just maybe, we're looking for love in all the wrong places. Let's go back to the basics and take some dating advice from the experts.**

According to [Dr. Brené Brown](#), a relationship expert and research professor at the University of Houston, "Love is that intangible connection between two people that feels exceptionally good." She further states that the strength and depth of this connection is determined by the self-acceptance, openness, and honesty of the two individuals and how exposed each is willing to be.

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Although not logical, love is both easy and mysterious. Couples who have been together for years often confess that they aren't really in love with each other. Don't feel hopeless! You're not on this quest alone.

A love map that gets you from one stage to the next doesn't exist, but there are two important questions to ask yourself.

**1. What are you looking for?** Once you understand your desired qualities, make a checklist.

**2. What do you think your future partner would want from you?** Always keep in mind that no one is perfect. Recognize your imperfections and understand your future lover may have a few flaws too.

**Once you've answered these two questions, follow my love advice below to find The One.**

**1. Love yourself first:** You are the only *you* in the universe. Work on being the best you that you can be by taking care of your mind, body, and spirit. Do you have characteristics about yourself that you dislike? You're not alone – we all have them. Our disliked imperfections become our trigger buttons. How we deal with our buttons is the answer. Now is the time to start accepting your imperfections and reminding yourself that no one is perfect. Taking this first courageous step will help lead you to discovering your own special qualities. Loving your whole self will lead to loving another.

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**2. Let your hair down:** Openness is a key ingredient to have in your relationships. We have different types of love in our life: sexual, mature, family, friends, and self. Think about

some of the people in your life who you are close with – maybe your partner or a friend – someone who has seen you at your very best and worst. They've seen you laugh and cry, be strong and weak. They were given permission by you to see the real deal. The totally exposed you is comfortable sharing yourself with a shared connection. Once you feel comfortable, you have the connection. And then, you have love.

*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](http://debbieceresa.com).*

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# Relationship Advice: 8 Creative Ways That Older Couples Can Keep the Romance Alive





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

Despite what the tabloids may say, not all celebrity relationships go down in flames. Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman were happily married for 50 years; Michael J. Fox and Tracy Pollan found lasting love; and Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson are still going strong. It may take a little extra effort to keep the love alive through the years, especially if you and your significant other have forgotten how to connect or are stuck in the same routine. But with some [relationship advice](#), the passion is sure to ignite again!

## **Consider the relationship advice below to add a little spice to your love life:**

**1. Get back to the basics:** As an experienced couple, you know what makes your love tick. It could be surprise kisses, breakfast in bed, watching the sunset together, or enjoying old movies. The relationship advice that I encourage you to

consider is to think back to the little things that made your partnership exciting over the years. Even holding hands or taking the time to express specific things you love about one another can make a big difference.

Leslie Stubenvoll, director of social services at [Palm Terrace Healthcare and Rehab](#) in Laguna Woods, CA, said, “The couples that shine the brightest are the ones that make the effort to hold hands, be extra nurturing, and pay attention to the other’s needs.” Sometimes, the most romantic thing you can do is give simple reminders and signals that they’re on your mind.

**2. Go on a walk together:** Quality time is a must when it comes to romance. Walking is the perfect way to spend quality time, share meaningful conversation, and even do some of that hand-holding! You’ll have the opportunity to reconnect, get some exercise and fresh air, and take a break from your usual routine.

**Related Link:** [Enjoy a Secret Sunset on Your Next Date Night](#)

**3. Plan a photoshoot:** Over the years, you’ve probably taken many family photos with kids, grandkids, and a wide range of color-coordinated outfits. Try doing a photo shoot of just the two of you. Dress up in your favorite clothes, drive to your favorite spot around town or in nature, and have your photos professionally taken. Not only will this be a fun way to spend time together, but it’ll also give you romantic photographs to hang up around your home. Not to mention, during the photo shoot, you’ll be reminded of how her eyes sparkle or how his smile makes your heart skip a beat!

**4. Take a road trip:** Your favorite tunes, good food, new sights, and the endless road add up to one great date idea. A road trip could be just the trick you need to rekindle your romance. Try adding a little excitement by making the destination unknown or researching a bed and breakfast where

you two can spend the night.

**5. Go on a scavenger hunt:** This romantic idea is a fun twist on a road trip. Map out all the places that are significant to your relationship, including favorite restaurants, places you love to walk, or locations of good memories. You can design it as a scavenger hunt with the final location being somewhere new to both of you. By the end of the day, you'll both be reminded of the history that's made your relationship strong.

**6. Focus on intimacy:** Some couples struggle with intimacy as they grow older. A [healthier](#) sex life between you and your partner could be the key to your romance struggles. If your relationship is lacking in this department, trade in a date night for a weekend getaway. For an even simpler idea, light some candles to set the mood. Intimacy is essential to connecting as a couple and can often be a romantic experience for both parties.

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**7. Explore new hobbies:** Learning something new is a great way to bond and make exciting memories with your loved one. Take up golfing or attend an art class. The two of you will have something new to share while spending meaningful time with each other. This kind of experience can help shake up the routine and reignite the romance.

**8. Learn about your love language:** Sometimes, the best way to increase romance is to learn how you and your partner want to be loved. One of my favorite books is [The 5 Love Languages](#). The book outlines the five possible ways most people want to receive and give love. Understanding how your partner wants to be loved, whether it's through acts of service or words of affirmation, will help you connect and feel the love on a deeper level.

It's never too late to turn up the heat in your love life. Try out some of these tips, and the flame of your romance will be

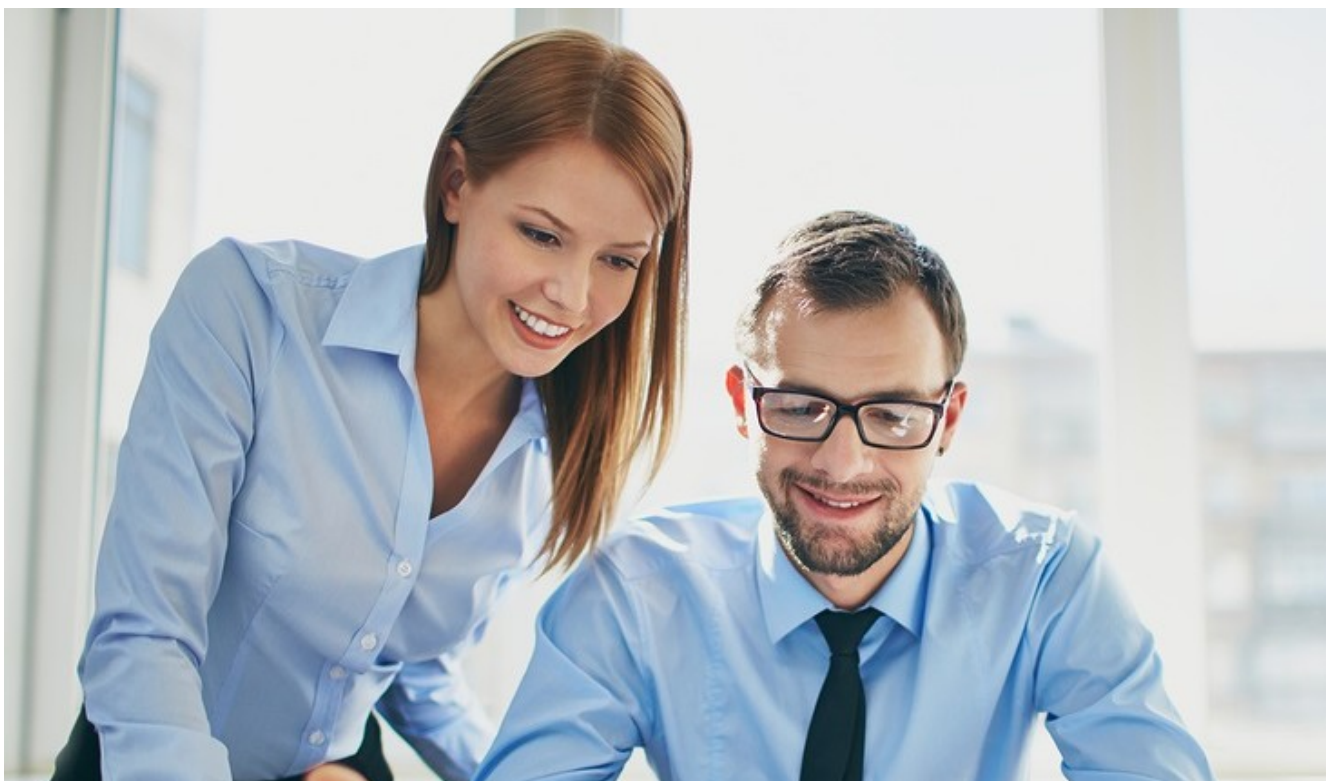
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**How do you and your sweetheart keep the romance alive? Comment below!**

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# Relationship Advice: How to Make This Valentine's Day Special for Your Loved One



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



In 1653, a Mughal emperor shared with the world a token of his tragic yet enduring love for his favorite wife Muntaz Mahal, who died during childbirth. Today, the emperor and his wife have all but blended into the annals of ancient history, but the symbol of his love remains as the gleaming white marble 42-acre structure known as the [Taj Mahal](#). While most public expressions of affection don't end up being a timeless wonder, many of today's celebrities make their mark in different and extravagant ways. As a relationship expert, I wanted to give you some unique ideas to celebrate Valentine's Day. Here's some [relationship advice](#) on how to say "I love you" to the special person in your life, like these celebrity couples.

## **Relationship Advice: Making Valentine's Day Special Like The Hollywood Stars**

**1. Share a little bit of nature.** I'm not talking about cut flowers or baskets of posies. With a little bit of creativity, you can find a bit of nature that symbolizes the unique relationship and love you share. For example, [Angelina Jolie](#) purchased an olive tree to give to her husband, Brad Pitt. Angie may have spent \$18,500 on this olive tree, but you can find something just as special but much more affordable. Aloe Vera plants, palms, fruit trees, and flowering plants are excellent alternatives to cut flowers. Also, some companies manufacture innovative bouquets made out of alternative materials that last forever and offer unique scents. [Ecoflower.com](#) designs arrangements using environmentally friendly and recycled materials like wood, paper, recycled jewelry among other things, and they will provide any scent you like such as raspberry, musk or lemon.

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**2. Share a wardrobe indulgence.** For [Jessica Simpson](#), that meant getting a \$15,000 Birkin bag from her husband, Eric Johnson. For the rest of us, receiving a smart jacket, a silk scarf, a sparkling bracelet, or snazzy boots can generate the same feeling of confidence at one-third of the price. I recall a young newlywed presented his wife with a necklace made of aquamarine. It wasn't the most valuable of gems, but the color reminded him of his wife's eyes.

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**3. Share an experience.** Angelina Jolie bought Brad Pitt flying lessons. Of course, she threw in the helicopter for good measure. [Beyonce](#) found a million-dollar token to share with husband, Jay-Z, when she presented him with a Grand Sport, reportedly one of the top performing and most expensive cars on the market. For you, a shared experience may be a hike to a cherished location, or a picnic in a secluded spot. Most people will tell you the things are nice, but sometimes it's the thought behind the gift that counts the most. A friend who lived by an Olympic training site bought her husband a ride on the bobsled track used in the 2002 Winter Olympics. It was an experience he will never forget.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity News: Check Out Rebel Wilson's Video Valentine's Day Message to Justin Bieber](#)

With Valentine's Day approaching, it seems the extravagant gifts is what makes the news. The relationship advice to remember is that Valentine's Day doesn't have an audience nor does it need a giant price tag. It's an opportunity for you to share a moment, a knowing exchange, a personal connection that is meaningful for the two people that matter the most—you and your loved one.

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What has been your most meaningful Valentine's Day experience?  
Comment below!

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# Relationship Advice: How Your Relationships And Love Impact Your New Year's Resolutions



By Toni Coleman, LCSW

Now that we're closing in on February, it's a good time to take inventory of how your New Year's resolutions are progressing, or not. Have you made adjustments to your

environment, created a specific plan, tweaked your schedule or set aside time for following through on the short-term objectives that will get you there? If you have done even one of these, it's a real start. However, if you draw a blank when reading this, you may have already lost your resolve or even forgotten about your goals altogether. If this is the case, and you want to get back on track—it is important to examine where you got off course and what factors may have influenced it.

As a relationship expert, I notice that one variable people may overlook, but that carries a lot of weight, is how much support you get from your relationship and love. In assessing this, it's important to pay attention to what they do more than what they say. There are many subtle ways that a partner can sabotage your efforts, especially if he or she fears it will impact your shared lifestyle, threatens him in some way, or upset the status quo in general. If you believe this is occurring, consider talking to your partner about what you see happening and ask for help. My [relationship advice](#) is to look at the following eight behaviors to assist you in pinpointing and articulating your concerns and then moving toward a productive discussion on how you can best support one another.

## **Relationship Advice: How Partner's Can Sabotage New Year's Resolutions**

**Your partner resists changes that support your goals.** For example, you might need to eat an earlier dinner as part of your weight loss goal or you might find that early morning is the best time to work out, but it will mean your partner will then need to cover things at home. Perhaps you have found a class one evening that is just what you need to make an eventual career change, but it's during a time that would then require your partner to adjust their schedule. All of these are potential scenarios that people face when attempting to

make changes and a supportive partner will try to make accommodations whenever possible. Sometimes it just isn't possible and alternative solutions will need to be considered.

**Your partner insists on activities and interests that set you up for failure.** Maybe you have a long-standing tradition of eating take-out on Saturday nights in front of the TV that you follow-up with a decadent dessert. However, you need to make dietary changes that will support your goal for better nutrition and health. Maybe most of what you have always enjoyed together has been sedentary in nature, such as going to the movies, out to dinner, drinking with friends at a local pub, or hanging out in your bathrobes and reading or watching TV. While there is nothing wrong with doing any of these some of the time, if you have set a goal to be more active during leisure hours, these will need to be cut back in order to create time for something new. My relationship advice is to make sure your partner isn't insisting that everything stay the same. If they do this and pout, it will undermine your efforts and force you to make a choice between your relationship and your goal.

**Your partner makes negative comments about your changes.** Statements like, "You're no fun anymore," or "It doesn't look like it's making any difference," can lead to you feeling bad about yourself or losing resolve due to a concern that the potential downsides to making the change outweigh the benefits. What you need instead is a cheerleader who offers encouragement, finds positive things to focus on—and lets you know they support you, no matter what.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Why Your Dating New Year's Resolutions Fail](#)

**Your partner behaves punitively when he doesn't get his way.** Change is hard for everyone. Your partner might feel bad about losing his drinking or eating buddy. She might feel some resentment about making changes in her schedule or to giving

something up to accommodate your new needs. He might be feeling nostalgia for some things you used to do together and with others that you now need to refrain from. These feelings are natural and understandable, but your partner should bring them up with you in a non-defensive way instead of acting out. You might be able to come up with compromises that meet both of your needs while allowing your partner to hang on to some of the things that are most important to them.

**Your partner throws temptations in your path.** An all too common scenario is the one where one spouse decides to give up sweets or alcohol, and her partner begins bringing home a lot of what the other is trying to abstain from, and encouraging them to try just a little bite or sip. There are many reasons for why this behavior is so common, but none of them are good ones. If this is happening to you, my love advice is to address it immediately by making a gentle request for “free temptation zones” in your home.

**Your partner lacks awareness of how your changes are threatening her.** It can be difficult for your partner to see you working towards a goal that he or she feels they should also be working toward. If you have always been overweight together, having a spouse who suddenly loses weight and feels good about her new appearance could be threatening, especially when other people of the opposite sex take notice. If you give up drinking, he may feel judged when he reaches for a beer, glass of wine or a cocktail; even if you don't indicate that you have an issue with it. Should he begin to act threatened by a change you are making that he or she believes they also should be working on, consider bringing up your observations gently with them. Remind him that this is a choice that you have made for yourself and that he is free to do the same or not, depending on his needs and wants.

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**Your partner creates a competition between you.** This one dovetails on the one above—you are not in competition, you are (or should be) on the same side. Being on the same team means you support one another's success, cheering each other along on the road to accomplishment. If your partner starts bean counting, it will undermine the relationship as this causes division and an attitude of me first, me only. If two people are focused on their needs and wants, the couple cannot function as a cohesive unit, which is the foundation of a healthy and mutually satisfying relationship.

**Your partner sees changes as meeting your needs vs. meeting his needs.** A supportive and happy relationship is not an "either, or" one. When problem-solving becomes a contest where one spouse is designated the winner and the other the loser, both people in the relationship lose. There is a very wide continuum between those two ends, and somewhere along the way are points at which a compromise can be found.

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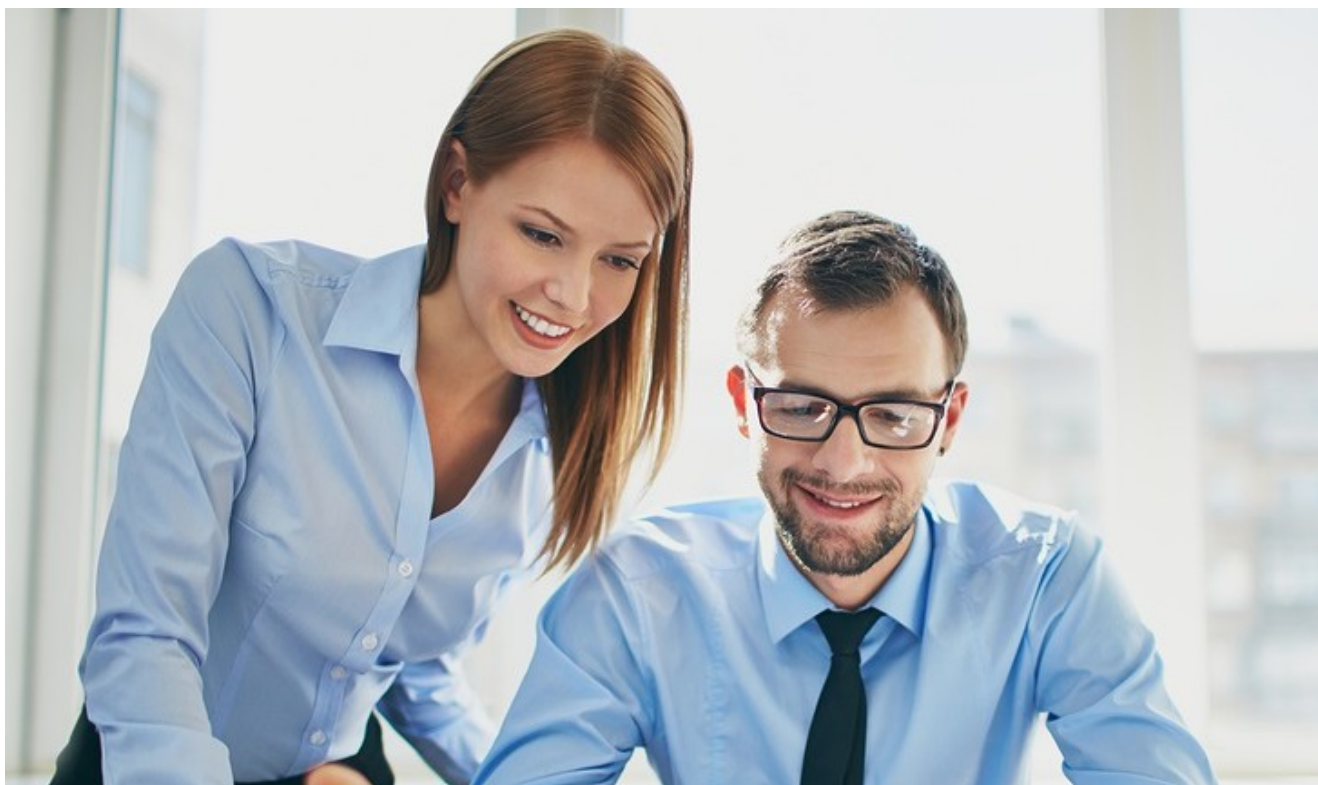
Negotiation and compromise are essential to the health of every relationship, as is getting the kind of support that will help you stick to and achieve your resolutions. When you win, your partner also wins—and vice versa.

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# Dating Advice: New Year's Resolutions To Rekindle Your Relationships and Love



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

Has your marriage lost that lovin' feeling? The same old New Year's resolutions of getting into sexy shape by going to the gym won't rekindle the once burning embers in your relationships and love. Now is the time to reignite your relationship flame. It's important to remember that you did find the right person, but somewhere along the way you lost yourself. Think back to the time you fell in love. Not long



ago, you could look at each other and instantly know each other's thoughts or just the memory of your loved one made you smile. You can be that right person for each other again. As a relationship expert, my [dating advice](#) is to start by conjuring up those lost memories while you work on the five following commitments.

## Dating Advice On Rekindling The Lovin' Feeling In Your Marriage

**1. Respect:** Aretha Franklin knew it was worth spelling out. You know respect when you feel it. It's an inner sense we all have. If you want to be admired and held in high esteem, know that your spouse is looking for that same feeling. Respect is essential in a successful marriage. Often it manifests itself in small gestures such as the endearing name that makes you feel loved or expressing thanks for the cup of coffee your spouse makes for you every morning. These are little gestures, but how about the bigger ones? Talk to each other when making joint decisions, whether it involves accepting a dinner invitation or making a huge purchase. Recognize each other's strengths and weaknesses and encourage rather than belittle your partner. Make a conscious effort to bring back your secret looks, kind acts, and loving nicknames.

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**2. Teamwork:** "I'm on your side," should be your motto to each other. Author and marriage and family therapist [Tina B. Tessina](#) shared in her book, *Money, Sex and Kids: Stop Fighting about the Three Things That Can Ruin Your Marriage*, that instead of dwelling on who's right and who's wrong, the focus should be on solving the problem that the two of you are facing together. Her dating advice emphasizes on talking about your challenge long enough to understand it. Then you can move

on with mutual solutions. Working together to find a joint solution will add motivation to continue working as team players both during challenges and good times.

**3. Love:** I love you. This phrase never goes out of style. It's a powerful statement to each other that can't be said enough. We all enjoy being loved. Love is sharing, appreciating, and admitting our mistakes. Have you heard the saying, "You attract more bees with honey than vinegar?" The more love energy you send out, the more your spouse and others will want to be around you. Write down a few date ideas, initiate a date night and spend time being a couple. Incorporate your teamwork skills to schedule a special event without your cell phones, kids or friends. It's always fun to think outside the box and try a new activity, such as visiting a museum or a unique restaurant.

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**4. Commitment:** "When people say they are committed to his or her relationship, they can mean two things," said Benjamin Karney, a professor of psychology and co-director of the [Relationship Institute at UCLA](#). "One thing they can mean is, 'I really like this relationship and want it to continue.' However, commitment is more than just that." A deeper level of commitment, the psychologists report, is a much better predictor of lower divorce rates and fewer problems in marriage. "It's easy to be committed to your relationship when it's going well," said senior study author Thomas Bradbury, a psychology professor who co-directs the Relationship Institute. "As a relationship changes, however, you must say something like, 'I'm committed to this relationship, but it's not going very well – I need to have some resolve, make some sacrifices and take the steps I need to take to keep this relationship moving forward.'"

**5. Forgiveness:** You were the one who was harmed and feels bad—why should you forgive? Forgiveness doesn't mean you

excuse the hurtful behavior, but it does mean you can let go and move forward. Here's the benefit: After you forgive, you'll feel better. Your ability to forgive gives you a feeling of empowerment and the power to take charge of your happiness. Holding onto old disappointments, arguments, and hurt is a waste of your time and energy. Forgiveness will keep you healthy both physically and emotionally.

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So if your relationship has lost that lovin' feeling—take five. By focusing on mutual respect, teamwork, love, commitment, and forgiveness, you will find the keys to a new and improved relationship just in time for the New Year.

*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](http://debbieceresa.com).*

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# Relationship Advice: Is

# Friendship After Divorce Possible?



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

Headlines are filled with photos of happy celebrities vacationing in remote places with their children in tow. It's a picture perfect story—almost. For some celebrity exes such as Miranda Kerr and Orlando Bloom and Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon, the marriage ended long ago, but the family unit remains. It's not uncommon to hear stories of former couples vacationing together, living by each other and spending family time together. With such a high-profile breakup, how can co-parenting be such an easy transition for them? My [relationship advice](#) for you is to emulate these famous relationships because the success largely depends on the parents' ability to move forward.

# Relationship Advice Navigating Friendship Post-Divorce

Though the success of co-parenting is largely dependent on the circumstances of the split, these celebrity couples are proof that children can still grow up with the positive influence of both parents, even after the marriage or longtime relationship and love has ended. Here is my relationship advice for how to successfully transition from a married household to shared parenting between two households.

**1. Focus on long term.** A swift dose of reality should remind you that carrying anger or other negative feelings won't change the outcome. Your marriage died. Mourn the loss of that part of your life then move forward to create a new future for yourself and children. "I am always impressed when I see couples who manage to stay friends, as it takes strength in character and an understanding of the bigger picture to rise above the hurt," wrote Seth Myers, Psy.D., in the article, *Stay Friends After Divorce: Why, Coping, and Moving On*. "While we can't do much to change the state of affairs in other couples, you can reflect on your own relationship." Recognize that your former partner must make the same effort. This often means a new relationship—and you need to be okay with that.

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**2. You are not defined by your divorce, so don't allow it to dictate your actions.** Your role as a spouse may be over, but your parenting role continues. Don't allow the end of your marriage to overshadow the positive, future memorable moments you owe your children. By making the choice to fill your life with positive and hopeful plans for the future, you'll have a solid base on which to build new relationships. But, you do need a plan. A personal strategy will lessen the potentially negative effects if you witness your partner moving forward. It will also remind you to stay focused on the plans you have

prepared for your progress. This transition requires a great deal of discipline and compromise since you're putting your feelings aside for the sake of contributing to a positive parenting environment for your children. A large part of this growth is recognizing that was then, and this is now. Your actions will be a lasting example for your children. What message do you hope they remember? Whether positive or negative—it'll make an impact.

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**3. Relationships are life's classroom.** Seth Myers described it best when he wrote, "Too often, men and women end relationships and feel that they made a mistake in choosing the partner they committed to in the past because the relationship didn't work. But such a perspective betrays the bigger picture that relationships are one of life's greatest classrooms and it's within this context that we figure out what we need and learn how to move closer to true fulfillment." Instead of focusing your energy on changing the result of your ended marriage by making him pay for what he did, recognize your role in the demise of that relationship and make it a goal to learn from that experience. Feelings of resentment and revenge do nothing to change the outcome. All it does is affect those you still fully love—your children. "Barring cases of abuse," added Myers, "learning to forge a friendship with your ex after divorce can be a truly healing experience and allows for an important integration of your past with the present."

By staying committed to long-term goals, maintaining a positive and hopeful attitude on your future, and viewing your relationship as a learning experience, you're set to develop a surprisingly supportive relationship with the one person who used to know you best and that's a winning strategy for you and your children.

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