



Six Simple Secrets of Great Relationships

What are the essential qualities of a great relationship? Communication and conflict resolution skills are at the top of the list, but there are other skills and simple secrets to keep your relationship healthy and thriving. Below are six:

- **Share secrets**

The best relationships involve friends who are open and honest with each other. They are not afraid to share parts of themselves with their partner. A strong sense of safety and trust is necessary in sharing secrets with each other – secrets that reveal your greatest interests, desires, dreams and disappointments. Being vulnerable increases intimacy and strengthens the relationship bond. Honor each other by creating a safe place for sharing secrets.

- **Cultivate common interests**

Spending quality time together is crucial. This time can be with friends, dining out, attending a sporting event, or cuddling together while watching a favorite movie. What you do together is not important, but the fact that you *are* together, doing something that you *both* enjoy. Be creative when cultivating common interests. Inquire about your mate's hobbies and interests; be open to learning something new and share with each other ideas for common activities and interests. This will keep the fun in the friendship!

- **Pursue personal passions**

As important as spending quality time together is, it is equally important to give each other freedom to pursue solo interests. You must maintain a healthy sense of “self” in any relationship. Reflect on your own forgotten hobbies and dive into personal pursuits that unleash your passions and unique gifts. Whether it's playing a musical instrument, baking or bowling, allow yourself some time to enjoy life apart from your partner. You will then feel renewing and refreshed as a couple!

- **Show support**

Actions and words that show support are keys to a great relationship. Find ways to validate your respect for each other. Remind him (or her) that he is a wonderful mate, spouse and parent. Lavish compliments are too often left assumed when they should be spoken. When your partner experiences failure or simply feels down or insecure, your encouragement is an opportunity to build them up by showing your sincere support. This is a blessing of a partnership – having your mate remind you of your greatness, in good times and in bad.

- **Forego the fairytale**

When couples first get together, everything is new and exciting. They overlook the little annoying things the other person does and perhaps maintain a fairytale that all imperfections will disappear. Having unrealistic expectation about whom the other person “will become” or how ideal the relationship will always be destined it for disaster. Great relationships require ongoing effort, based upon the love and values shared. Allow for shortcomings and be flexible as you work to create and maintain a great, but real relationship.

- **Release resentments**

When you cannot let go of your guilt, regrets and resentments there might as well be a chain connecting you to the past. Be willing to forgive and to learn from mistakes that will certainly occur. Living in a pain-filled past and harboring (what may be justified) resentments breeds a bacteria that stifles the growth of any relationship. What resentments should you release?