



CENTERSTONE

Wellness Program

Four Facts of Functional and Fun Relationships



Is it possible to have a satisfying relationship that excels the esteem and delight of both partners? Relationships that thrive and endure hard times are not successful simply because there is love between the couple. Some relationships can provide great fun, yet be very dysfunctional. Some relationships seem to work like a thriving business, yet are stale and flat in the fun department.

In times of emotional stress and financial turmoil, relationships can still be functional and fun! Here are some key qualities of functional and fun relationships, and specific actions you can take today to make positive changes in your relationship.

Nurturance: Love and Respect

Nurturance in relationships includes ongoing endorsements of the other person, rather than attempts to fix or change them. Individuals involved in lasting relationships love each other even when their partner doesn't seem too lovable. Partners in successful relationships believe in each other, and find ways to demonstrate that confidence. Take every opportunity to congratulate each other on even the smallest achievements.

Demonstrating love and respect toward your partner will create a strong core for a lasting connection.

Honesty: Trust and Communication

Relationships that really work endorse open communication and mirror complete trust. Trust that your partner will hold your interest in the same regard as they hold their own. Successful partners find great comfort in being honest about their wants, desires and disappointments. Listening well is a gift that encourages honesty and trust. When personal interests and feelings are withheld from each other, there is no glue to bind the relationship.

Trust and communication go hand-in-hand. A lack of honesty ensures weak communication and minimal trust, which are ingredients for a relationship lacking in function and fun.

Resolution: Conflict and Resiliency

All relationships experience times of crisis and challenge. Surviving times of transition means change and growth. Without a mutual resolution and a plan to handle tough times, marriages and relationships can destruct. It is helpful to have a method for problem-solving together. Have a "can do" approach to conflict, and talk through disagreements. Learn to replace hurtful words with words that build and strengthen the relationship. Having a forward-looking attitude, minus a critical spirit, promotes a resilient and successful relationship.

Maintenance: Participation and Responsibility

Some couples believe once they tie the knot, the fun begins and responsibility ends. Functional and fun relationships need maintenance, just like your house, car and body. Both partners should take daily ownership and actively participate in the joint success of being a couple. Partners should continually ask themselves what they can do to better the relationship. Individuals who only look to each other for sources of happiness will be disappointed. Be active and responsible partners, and the fun times will follow!

About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), a not-for-profit organization is the nation's largest provider of community-based behavioral healthcare. With a history that spans over fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to more than 69,000 individuals of all ages and their families annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs in more than 120 facilities and 150 partnership locations in Tennessee and Indiana. Centerstone is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Tennessee and The Joint Commission in Indiana. For more information about Centerstone, please call toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.