

One of the most desired classes each and all of my client's wishes there had been in high school or college is: Relationships 101. During my coaching and recently during a 'dating class' I taught, there are two central themes that I continue to help folks with: ***finding an ideal mate & creating their ideal relationship***. Now some of the folks I help are just starting dating, others in relationships of 1-8 years; while others have 20-25 year marriages, and so on.

Yet there is a common theme, a pattern that emerges that in order to find that love of your life, or create a the relationship you love with the beloved you are with. Yes, just a few simple things you can do... they are these:

1. Know what you want
2. Be the mate you want to have in the world
3. Love often
4. Know your partner is your best teacher
5. Be nice, communicate often, be nice again

Yet, some say: "that it's just not possible"...ok, maybe for you it's not...in fact, I'm sure of it. I'm just as sure that if you read this article, and practice the principles, your relationship will improve. What do you have to lose? What do you have to gain? Use 5 minutes of your time to read the article, and then reap the many rewards!

Know what you want

The first thing I teach is to know specifically what you want. This is true whether you are just starting dating or have been with the same person for 25 years. Knowing what you want is the place to start as you begin any venture.

*If you don't know what you want, how will you know when you have it?

It is much easier to know what you don't like, or don't want... yet, if given the opportunity to have exactly everything you want...what would you wish for?

This exercise is designed to spark your imagination, to tap into some of your unspoken wants, desires and dreams. So I invite you to let yourself have some or lot's of it!

Here is the exercise:

Imagine that you can have the ideal mate or relationship, have some fun. What do they look like? How do they dress? What do you like to talk about together? How do you honor each other? Do you argue? How do you enjoy your sexlife together? What are their values-what's important to them? Are they a wage earner? Do they have a savings? What about children?

These are just a few of the questions to get you started. What I really want you to do is to write a description of who you are looking for, as if you were on some online dating service. While you're at it, the second part of the exercise is to write a profile about YOU. If you were to describe yourself to a potential mate, what are you offering on the table? Who are you in the relationship?

*Just by letting yourself it you get to know you much better!

This is the beginning of tapping into your desires. As you progress in your relationship dream, you can include writing a story as if you were starting your day, waking up in the morning: How would you start your day? Ease quietly out of bed to make the coffee? Nudge your mate good morning? Cuddle? Hot sex? Hitting the alarm and going back to bed? You see, this is your dream; you get to pick ALL OF IT! Then what do you do as you wake up and prepare for your day? Do you both jump in the shower? Take turns? How and where do you live?

The key here is to begin to tap into your dreams and desires...what YOU truly want. Then you can build on this as you desire.

Be the Mate You Want In the World

Gandhi says: "Be the change you want in the world". The same is true about relationship. I have worked with hundreds of people who have had trouble in relationship: finding distrust, betrayal, manipulation or were simply "accepting the status quo". They were tired of it and wanted something else. During our coaching it became clear that from a place of fear, were also 'holding back'; not trusting, not being completely honest (with themselves or their others)...that THEY needed to create the relationship they want!

Sometimes it is simply a matter of being nicer; letting your other know they are important, that you appreciate them. After one session only one session with a couple, with the advice to actively share love and appreciation daily, their marriage and relationship transformed immediately.

It is a matter of knowing what you want (see step 1!) and then discussing these things with your mate or potential mate. If you want a partner who does personal work, you ask them these questions during your first or second date, or well before? If education or intelligence is important, you ask questions that give you that information.

Something I recommend to all couples or those seeking relationship is to become familiar with "Love Languages" by Gary Chapman. In brief, we each have our own particular 'way' or 'language' that when it happens, we feel loved. The 5 are: 1) Touch, 2) Words of Affirmation, 3) Quality Time, 4) Acts of Service, 5) Gifts. His book "The Five Love Languages" is an excellent read, I recommend buying two copies, one for each of you. [I have an abbreviated version for you here:](#)

Love Often

This is my favorite. Love...loving your other...will be the biggest and most significant thing you can do every day. Love them big. Love them often. Did you choose them so that you could spend some or much of your time NOT loving them? So you could sleep together and share a busy life, sometimes talk and go to sleep again? NO WAY!

Loving your other or others in your life is in direct proportion to your ability to love yourself. The more each of us accept and love ourselves, the more freely we are able to love others in our life. I mean really loving them...from deep down in your heart, with compassion, connection, depth and breadth of love for this other.

Again, if you are being the mate you want in the world, be kind, be loving, be patient, be compassionate, be trusting and trustworthy...it will pay off in dividends!!!

Know Your Partner is Your Best Teacher

This can be a tough one, and it's true. Our partner's are our best teachers. No where else do we risk as much: to love and be loved... to trust bigger, to be intimate and vulnerable... This is where our deeper stuff comes out, in this our most significant of relationships. For many, this is where the rubber meets the road...or one of YOU hit the road.

If you have had or are currently in a relationship where you think the 'other' is the problem, then you need to look in the mirror. You are creating this, you have chosen them, and what are YOU going to do?

Whether dating or in a long term relationship, the things that 'irk' you about your partner are really...well...you in disguise. That's right...they are parts of you I refer to as your 'shadow' or 'shadow selves'. They are in large part things you deny about yourself...they can be good (light shadows) or bad (dark shadows). For more detail about this, I have gone into much more detail in my book: [*Success is a State of Mind*](#). that can be found on my [products page here](#).

Bottom line: in order to have a great relationship, there are some things you will need to adjust in you. Being nicer more often, loving more actively, being honest, having scary conversations...all the real adult stuff we do in relationship.

I have included some work from Harville Hendrix below.

Ten Characteristics of a Conscious Marriage

From: Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples: Harville Hendrix, Ph.D.

1. You realize that your love relationship has a hidden purpose—the healing of childhood wounds.
2. You create a more accurate image of your partner.
3. You take responsibility for communicating your needs and desires to your partner.
4. You become more intentional in your interactions.
5. You learn to value your partners' needs and wishes as highly as you value your own.
6. You embrace the dark side of your personality.
7. You learn new techniques to satisfy your basic needs and desires.
8. You search within yourself for the strengths and abilities you are lacking.
9. You become more aware of your drive to be loving and whole and united with the universe.
10. You accept the difficulty of creating a good marriage.

Be nice, communicate often, and be nice again

Being nice during communication and communicating regularly are part and parcel of good relationships. The amount will vary per couple, but think about it. How much of your own internal decision making do you do each day? Now compound that with the fact that your partner is doing the same and it is up to you two to coordinate your efforts: not only to earn money & maintain a household but to have agreements in place about how you meet your own and each others emotional and physical wants and needs.

Knowing what you both want, and then to love-honor-negotiate is what great relationship is all about! Then the 'other stuff' comes up: the stuff of our childhoods, of past loves, past hurts, fears, and the pull for the safety of accepting things as 'status quo'. No maam...no sir!

My wife Connie & I are likely the extreme. We are both helping professionals and very committed to our personal/spiritual growth as well as growth in the relationship and spend time daily together and talking. A friend of mine is a lawyer, his wife is a therapist. In his house as well, 'couch talking time' is part of the relationship...it often comes with the turf. Others I coach or know who have great relationships, well, they take the time necessary to build their relationship. Like a garden, your relationship needs consistent tending to...consistent tender loving care. So, be nice, communicate often and be nice some more.

Having trouble being nice during conversations? Certainly some coaching may be in order... Email me jim@trulyhumancoaching.com and I'll be happy to give you some direction. here are a couple of sources for you:

- [**The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Lethal Patterns That Can Ruin Relationships**](#)
- [**Triggers**](#)
- [**The #1 Rule in Relationship-BE GENUINLY NICE!**](#)

Conclusions

Be gentle with yourself and your beloved. A consistent reminder to my clients, my wife, my children... "Be Gentle With Yourself"... Think about this:

The first thing in most ventures we partake in is to know what we want. To be clear of our goal, our destination/s. We spend years preparing via college, trade school &/or training for our career...for our work, the thing we will be doing 25-80 hours a week, the thing we will be 'earning our way' with.

Now you know there are 168 hours per week... and for many of us; this includes time with a spouse, partner or significant other. Where do we learn and how long do we prepare for THIS set of experiences?

We learn it first from our parents, then our larger culture. Then we relearn it, through our own relationships, through reading, through therapy or coaching, through practice and care...and we keep learning it.

AND YES, IT TAKES PRACTICE...DAILY PRACTICE!

I little saying I have hanging on my wall, for you:

***Be Gentle with yourself.
You are a child of the universe,
no less than the trees and the stars.
In the noisy confusion of life,
keep peace in your soul.
-Max Ehrmann***