

Welcome!



Elevate

Taking Your Relationship to the Next Level

LAY THE FOUNDATION



EMPOWER
YOURSELF



LAY THE
FOUNDATION



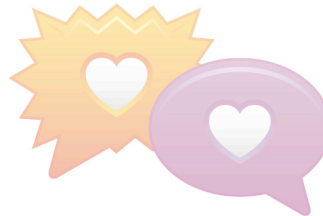
ENLIGHTEN



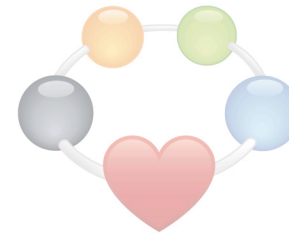
VALUE



ATTACH



TAME



ENGAGE

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Preparing for the Journey



What equipment is necessary when going on a rafting trip?

What equipment is necessary when going on a rafting trip?

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Letting Your Relationship Slide?



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Launching a raft into a river...



Natural currents will try to take you downstream. It doesn't matter how much you care about each other, no matter how full of hope and promise and good intentions, if you stay on the raft without a good deal of paddling - infrequent or sporadic paddling is not enough - you will end up somewhere down river.

In human relations, “paddling” is like the attention and energy devoted to our relationships.

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Make Your Relationship a Priority



- ✓ Be aware of your choices, decisions, and actions.
- ✓ Be intentional in doing things that strengthen your relationship
- ✓ Choice is important to all other parts of a healthy relationship.

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Make Your Relationship a Priority



☐ MINE
☐ YOURS
☒ OURS

If couples are not continually doing things to hold on to each other, they will naturally drift apart.





Do You Avoid Hurtful Thoughts and Behaviors?



What we choose to think or say about our partner can help or harm the relationship. People often have rules or expectations about their relationship. Some of these “ground rules” include how partners treat each other, how they discuss problems, and the types of information that should or should not be shared with others. Below are some things that couples do that can help or hurt a relationship. What do you do? What do you feel that you could work on, do more or less of, or do better?

Things that Help a Relationship	I Do	I Need to Work On
I listen to my partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I make time for my partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I make efforts to keep my family from coming between us	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I keep promises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I make efforts to be open and not keep secrets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think about my partner's positive qualities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I remember things that are important to my partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try to understand my partner's point of view	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I thank my partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things that Hurt a Relationship	I Don't	I Need to Work On
I yell and shout at my partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I say things to make my partner feel bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I tell friends about problems in my relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sometimes flirt with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often compare my partner to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think about all the ways I want my partner to change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I put down my partner's ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I cut my partner off when talking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I walk away from my partner during disagreements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you doing more things that help (not hurt) your relationship? If so, great!

If there are things you feel you can work on, what steps can you take to improve? Perhaps there are some new ground rules that you could create for your relationship to avoid hurtful thoughts and behaviors. Choose one or two things above to work on, or decide on something else to do, or stop doing, that will help strengthen your relationship.

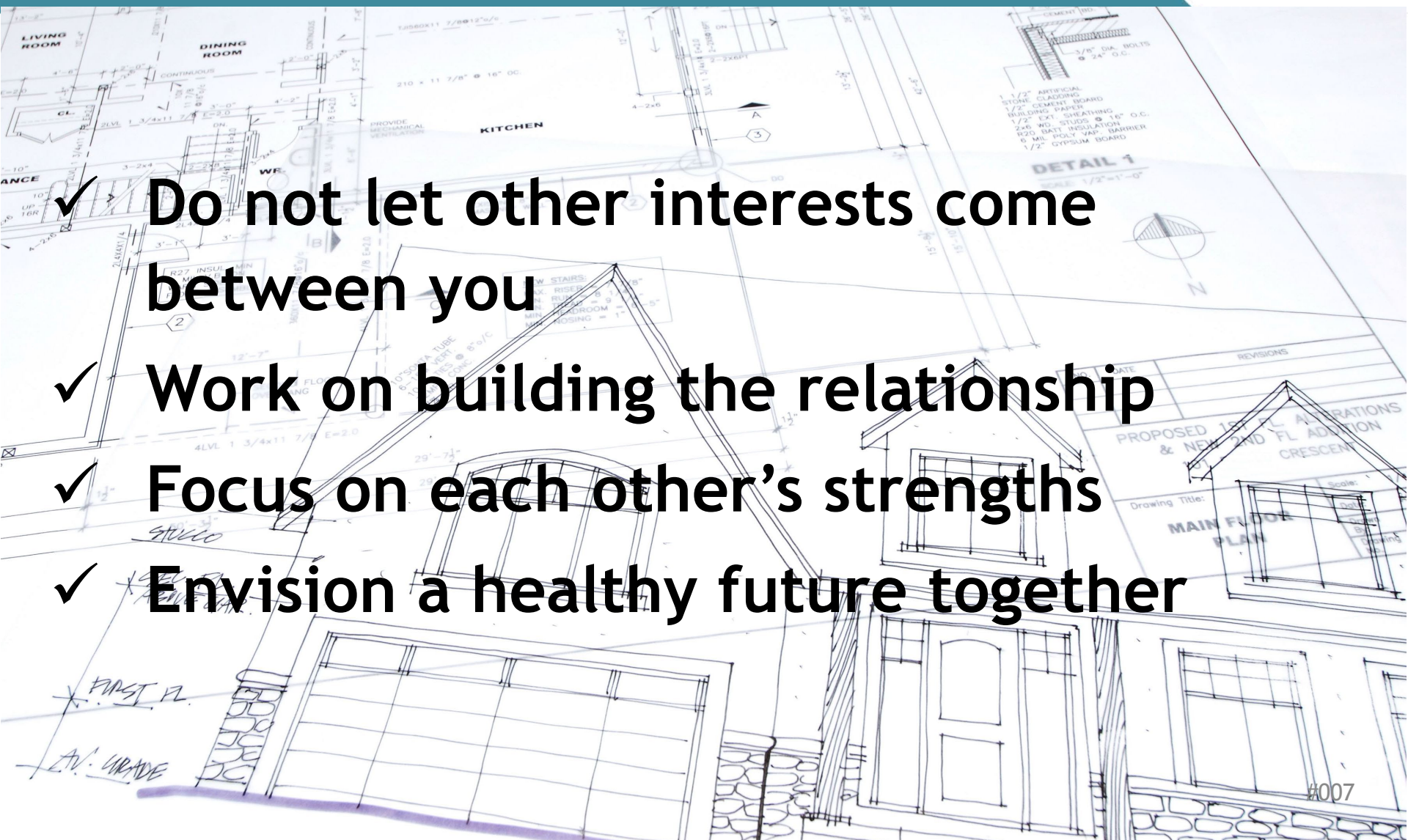
Choosing to think and act in positive ways and avoiding hurtful thoughts and behaviors will strengthen your relationship.

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Put Your Relationship First



- ✓ Do not let other interests come between you
- ✓ Work on building the relationship
- ✓ Focus on each other's strengths
- ✓ Envision a healthy future together



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Put Your Relationship First



What are some examples of obstacles, people, or life experiences that could interfere with your ability to make your relationship a priority?

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Put Your Relationship First



**What are
some ways that
you can show
commitment
to your
relationship?**





Ways to Show Commitment



It takes more than loving feelings to have a healthy relationship. It also takes commitment. Commitment means you will keep on treating your partner with respect, even if you are upset or angry. Commitment also means that you promise to support your partner now and in the future. How couples show commitment in a relationship can differ depending on past and present experiences and expectations.

Below is a list of actions that show commitment to a relationship. For each statement, decide whether it's something you do well or something you would like to do better.

I Already Do Well	I Would Like To Do Better	Committed Actions
		I make time to do things with my partner.
		I remember things that are important to my partner.
		I don't flirt with anyone but my partner.
		I celebrate traditions that are important to my partner.
		I keep promises that I make to my partner.
		I try to make our time together special.
		I pay more attention to my partner's good qualities instead of things I don't like.
		I make a point of remembering the good times we have shared.
		I do not share my partner's secrets with other people.
		I do not share details of our relationship with other people.
		I speak kindly about my partner to other people.
		I make the effort to understand my partner's needs and dreams.
		I take time to think of ways I could make our relationship stronger.
		I let my partner know that I value our relationship.
		I tell my partner that I want our relationship to last.

For the things you already do well, what are some specific examples and times you have done these things?

For those things you would like to do better, what are some specific ways you could improve? What could you work on?

What are the things your partner does well? Share this with your partner.

***The grass grows greener....on the side of the fence you water the most.
Make choices that show your commitment to your relationship.***

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Identify Signature Strengths



- ✓ What are your signature strengths?
- ✓ What are your partners strengths?





Focus on Strengths



Meaningful relationships do not happen by accident. There are special things about your partner – things that were said and done – that made you feel good. Over time, these positive moments and experiences brought you together and defined your relationship. Remembering those moments helps keep the relationship moving forward.

Every relationship also has its tough times. Remembering the special things that brought you together can help you move through those struggles. But sometimes it is hard to remember the good times when we don't stop to think about them. By making an effort to regularly think about the good times (and talk about them with your partner), it makes it easier to remember them during tough times.

Take a moment now to think about your partner and your relationship. How would you answer the questions below?

- What did you like best about your partner when you first met?
- What do you currently like best about your partner?
- How does your partner show his/her love for you?
- What do you like best about your relationship with your partner?
- Why did you choose this person to be with?

What would help you remember the positives?

Some couples keep a journal and write their thoughts and experiences so they can read them later. Other couples prefer to keep photos or something from their experience together that they can hold and look at later. Find ways that you and your partner can remember and cherish the good times in your relationship. Make time during special occasions, like birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays to talk about those positive moments.

Couples that focus on the good in each other and remember the positive moments in their relationship are more likely to be happy and satisfied with their relationship.

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Set Goals With Your Partner



What are some short term goals and long term goals that you and your partner share?

EXIT  ONLY





Envision a Healthy Future Together



Having shared goals is a way to stay committed as a couple and helps you think about your future together. When we set goals for our relationship, it tells our partner we're in it for the long haul. As you set relationship goals, think about the type of partner you want to be as well as the type of relationship you want to have.

Use the following questions to help you name some goals. Goals should be specific and realistic. Be honest about the things that really matter to you.

Short-term goals are things you would like to do within the next few months.

What are 3 of your most important short-term goals for your relationship?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Long-term goals will take longer to achieve – perhaps a year or more.

What are 3 of your most important long-term goals for your relationship?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What can you do to help you reach these goals? What are some things you need from your partner to reach these goals?

Do you and your partner have some goals in common? How can you work together to achieve your goals?

If some goals are different, what are some ways you can still work together to reach your goals?

***Setting goals for your relationship shows you are committed to a future together.
Working on goals together can help bring couples closer.***

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Be Intentional About Your Relationship



“In marriage, the grass grows greener...”



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Be Intentional About Your Relationship



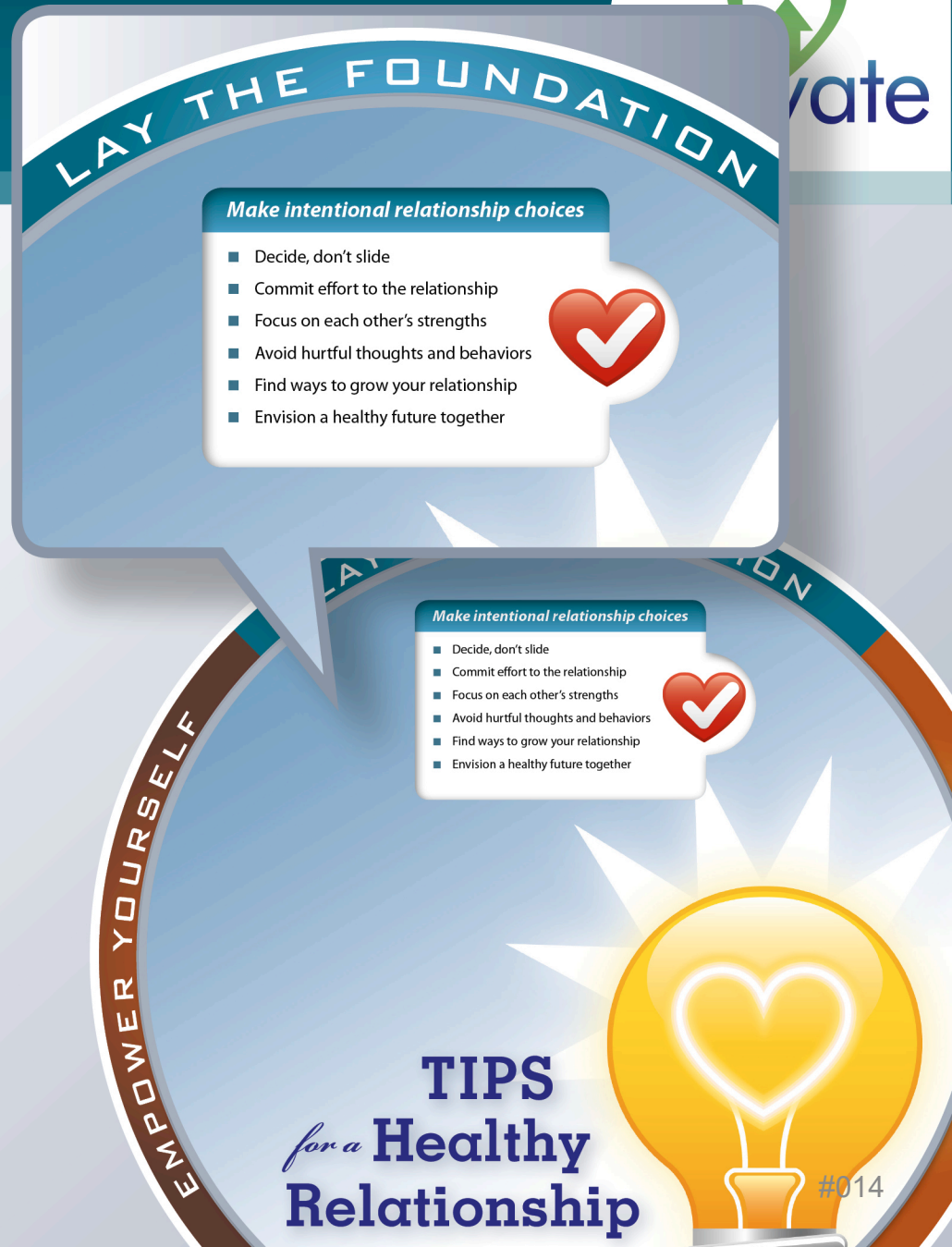
“In marriage, the grass grows greener...
...on the side of the fence you water most.”

Dr. James P. Marshall, The Marriage Garden



Action Plan

- ✓ What are ways that you show commitment to your partner?
- ✓ What is one new thing you plan to try?



Tips For a Healthy Relationship



EMPOWER YOURSELF—Individual health impacts the health of couple relationships. Taking care of yourself first can help improve the wellness of your relationship. Below are some ways that you can *Care for Self* and help your relationship:

- Eat healthy and exercise regularly.
- Set regular sleep and wake times for yourself.
- Notice and appreciate the small, good things in your life to help you find greater happiness and satisfaction.
- Find ways to use your strengths to serve your community.
- Look for the positive meaning in your life.
- Learn to manage stress in more healthy, effective ways.



LAY THE FOUNDATION—Are you making deliberate and conscious decisions about your relationships? It is important to be intentional when establishing and nurturing healthy relationships. Here are some ways to show how you *Choose* to strengthen your relationship:

- Make the decision to enter into a relationship rather than sliding into one.
- Commit and provide effort in the relationship.
- Focus on each other's strengths, and what each of you brings to the relationship.
- Avoid thoughts and behaviors that could potentially be hurtful to one another.
- Find positive and effective ways to grow your relationship.
- Envision and set goals for a healthy future together.



ENLIGHTEN—How well do you know your partner? Sharing and developing an understanding with your partner creates stability and increases awareness of your partner and the relationship. Here are some ways you can get to *Know* your partner better:

- Ask about your partner's life, thoughts, and feelings to get to know them better.
- Be sensitive to your partner's worries and needs.
- Think back on positive experiences you have had together.
- Express sincere interest in what is happening in your partner's life.
- See situations through your partner's eyes to gain a better understanding of how they look at things.
- Discuss what you expect in a relationship with one another.



VALUE—Keeping a relationship healthy is the responsibility of each person in that relationship. What do you do to show support, affection, and respect for your partner? Here are some ways to show that you *Care* for your partner:

- Show respect by expressing caring actions towards your partner instead of crabby reactions when he or she has had a stressful day.
- When communicating, be open and listen to your partner.
- Focus on the good in your partner.
- Accept and value the differences that you and your partner share.
- Give love in the way your partner likes to be loved.
- Show appreciation as a way to make a deposit in your relationship account.
- To maintain a strong relationship, make time for togetherness and moments of connection.



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Putting Effort into Your Relationships

Putting your relationship first

- Be aware of your thoughts and behaviors; focus on things you really like about your partner.
- Make a daily commitment to try and make the relationship better. Just showing that you are putting in effort can work wonders.
- Explore what it means to create a healthy relationship. *That's exactly what you're doing by reading this fact sheet—well done!* You are taking the time to figure out what it takes to make your relationship even better.



How can I show my partner I am committed to the relationship?

Make the relationship a priority. Making time for your relationship cannot be an afterthought. Try to set aside time each day to connect with each other.

Spend time together without distractions. Protect your relationship by doing more activities together. Avoid distractions like spending too much time watching television alone, making phone calls, or hanging out with others outside your relationship. The amount of time is different for each couple, so talk with each other about what you need.

Build traditions. Think of activities to do together consistently, in a way that builds connection.

- Make a point to sit down at the dinner table every night and talk about the highs and lows of the day.
- Schedule a date night every week.
- Plan a day trip together every few months.
- Start your own traditions around the holidays. The holidays can get very stressful. Take time out each year to have some special time between the two of you – whether it's sharing what you're thankful for or exchanging a small gift with each other. Create a ritual that you can enjoy each year together and that will build your relationship.

Practice Intentionality

Show your partner how much you love them by doing things that are important to them:

- Clean the house
- Plan dates
- Share intimate feelings without being asked
- Pick up your partner's favorite treat
- Cuddle on the couch



Envision a healthy future together. Think about and talk about your future as a couple. Assure your partner that you want to spend the rest of your life with him or her. Make a plan each year to set new and exciting goals for your relationship.

Focus on strengths. Choose to dwell on your partner's strengths and look past their weaknesses. Think about what is going well rather than focusing on the negative aspects of the relationship. Learn to be positive!

Make your relationship a priority. Make time for each other and balance your personal interests with the relationship. Talk about what you need from each other. Separate activities and interests are healthy, but only if they are balanced with couple time, too.



Turn Off Relationship “Cruise Control”

Sometimes relationships can run on autopilot. Partners sometimes forget or don't have the energy to put the relationship first.

Jumpstart your relationship by:

- Sending the kids away to play at a friend's house
- Setting time every day for couple talk
- Setting a bed time for the children and protecting that time
- Not inviting friends or family for a visit when you already have planned to do something together as a couple
- Reading a book together
- Taking evening walks together
- Learning something new together
- Most importantly, having fun with each other!

Couples that choose to make the relationship a priority often have fewer fights and happier relationships!

My Action Plan



What will you do to ELEVATE your love?

Empower Yourself

Lay the Foundation

Enlighten
