

Welcome!



Elevate

Taking Your Relationship to the Next Level

ATTACH



EMPOWER
YOURSELF



LAY THE
FOUNDATION



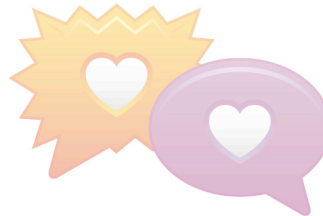
ENLIGHTEN



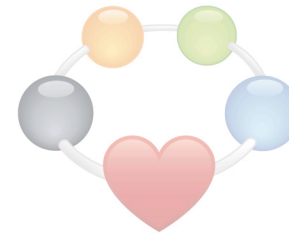
VALUE



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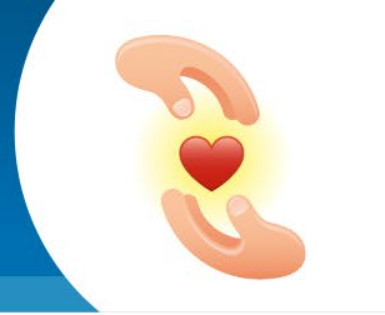
TAME



ENGAGE

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3 Critical Elements of Building Friendship



- ✓ Spend meaningful time together
- ✓ Build couple identity
- ✓ Nurture positive interactions

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Spending Time Together



**What
may be
done
at any
time will
be done
at no
time.**

Scottish
Proverb





Making Time to Connect



There are 168 hours in a week. How many do you devote to your relationship?

How much time do you devote to your partner in a single day? What about in a week? Life is hectic. Sometimes it can feel like we do not have any time for ourselves, let alone our partners and families. But couples who have the strongest relationships find time to work on their relationship every day through shared interactions.

Couple rituals are shared interactions that are repeated and significant to both partners. They do not have to be time consuming. In fact, you might be surprised how quickly just a few simple daily rituals can add up.

Following are a few ways you can spend just 5 extra hours each week connecting:

Before leaving: Do not leave without knowing one interesting thing that will happen in your partner's day.

2 minutes a day X 5 working days
= 10 minutes per week

When returning: Have a 20 minute stress-free conversation. Give full attention. Show support and understanding before giving advice.

20 minutes a day X 5 working days
= 100 minutes per week

Admire and appreciate: Find some way every day to give or show genuine affection and appreciation. Call, text, or email to touch base when you are away from each other.

5 minutes a day X 7 days
= 35 minutes per week

Affection: Cuddle, kiss, and hold hands. Go to bed at the same time even if you do not go to sleep at the same time. Remember to kiss each other before going to sleep.

5 minutes a day X 7 days
= 35 minutes per week

Alone time: Devote at least 2 hours a week to uninterrupted time alone together. Avoid talking about who will do what chores or tasks. Spend time catching up, reminisce, talk about your hopes and dreams, and just enjoy your time together.

120 minutes per week

TOTAL: 300 minutes per week (5 hours)

***Commit to putting in a little extra effort every day
to strengthen your relationship!***

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Spending Time Together



**In what ways
do you like to
share with
your partner?**





Ways We Like to Share



Over time, because couples get busy with work, chores, and family responsibilities, they spend less time focused on each other. No matter how long couples have been together, it is still important to find ways to spend meaningful time together. Small moments of connection can add up to deep intimacy and passion.

Following is a list of some simple things couples can do together to nurture positive interactions.

1. Call or text just to say, "I love you!"
2. Go for a walk
3. Cook dinner or dessert together
4. Volunteer together
5. Attend a sporting event
6. Play cards or a board game
7. Go to a free community event
8. Listen with all your attention
9. Do household tasks together
10. Ask about each other's day
11. Plan a vacation
12. Send funny/flirty emails or texts
13. Watch a sunset or look at the stars
14. Have a tickle fight
15. Plant flowers or a tree
16. Flirt like you just met
17. Hold hands
18. Make up a song
19. Go to the park
20. Write love notes

Now come up with your own lists of ways to share and spend meaningful time together.

There are probably some hobbies or activities you like to do together, as well as some things that one of you likes to do but the other does not enjoy as much. Take some time to write down a few things you each like to do, as well as a few things you like to do together.

I like to:	My partner likes to:	We both like to:
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____	9. _____
10. _____	10. _____	10. _____

From time to time when you select an activity, try out something from each other's lists. You might discover more activities you enjoy doing together!

Small moments together add up to a stronger friendship and deeper connection.

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Distractions to Spending Time Together



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Distractions to Spending Time Together



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Foster Your Couple Identity



Celebrations



Traditions



Rituals





Couple Rituals and Traditions



The special things we look forward to as a couple and the everyday routines we follow are like threads that bind us together. The ways we do things become our traditions and rituals. They are rarely written down, but they are important to our connection with each other.

Use this tool to identify traditions and rituals that already exist in your relationship, as well as to name some new ideas you would like to try.

What are 3 things you and your partner do together almost every day?
(Examples: kiss, hug, talk about our day, eat a meal, share morning coffee)

What are 3 things you do with your partner as traditions, things you look forward to and plan?
(Examples: holiday or birthday celebrations, vacation)

What are some things you wish you and your partner did together every day? Be specific. How could you and your partner begin these new rituals?

What are a few new traditions that you would like to start? Be specific. How could you and your partner begin these new traditions?

Families that have the strongest ties have the most traditions and rituals in their life.

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Nurture Positive Interactions



**Quality of
time, not just
quantity of
time, matters!**

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It's not only WHAT you say, but HOW you say it!



Dude!



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It's not only WHAT you say, but HOW you say it!



You just found out
that you won a free
trip to Hawaii!

Dude!



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It's not only WHAT you say, but HOW you say it!



I think you just
stepped in dog poop!

Dude!



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It's not only WHAT you say, but HOW you say it!



You just found out
your partner
wrecked the car.

Dude!



ATTACH

It's not only WHAT you say, but HOW you say it!



You see your partner in an attractive outfit.

Dude!



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Non Verbal Communication



Touch

Volume

Posture

Gestures

Eye contact

Facial expressions

Proximity when speaking

(too close or too far away)



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Filters get in the way of communicating...



**Emotional
states**

**Beliefs and
expectations**

Distractions

**Differences
in style**

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Bids for Connection



**How you
choose to
respond
matters!**

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It's Not About the Nail!



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Unhelpful Messages



Turning Away

Ignoring your partner's bid or continuing what you were doing.

Turning Against

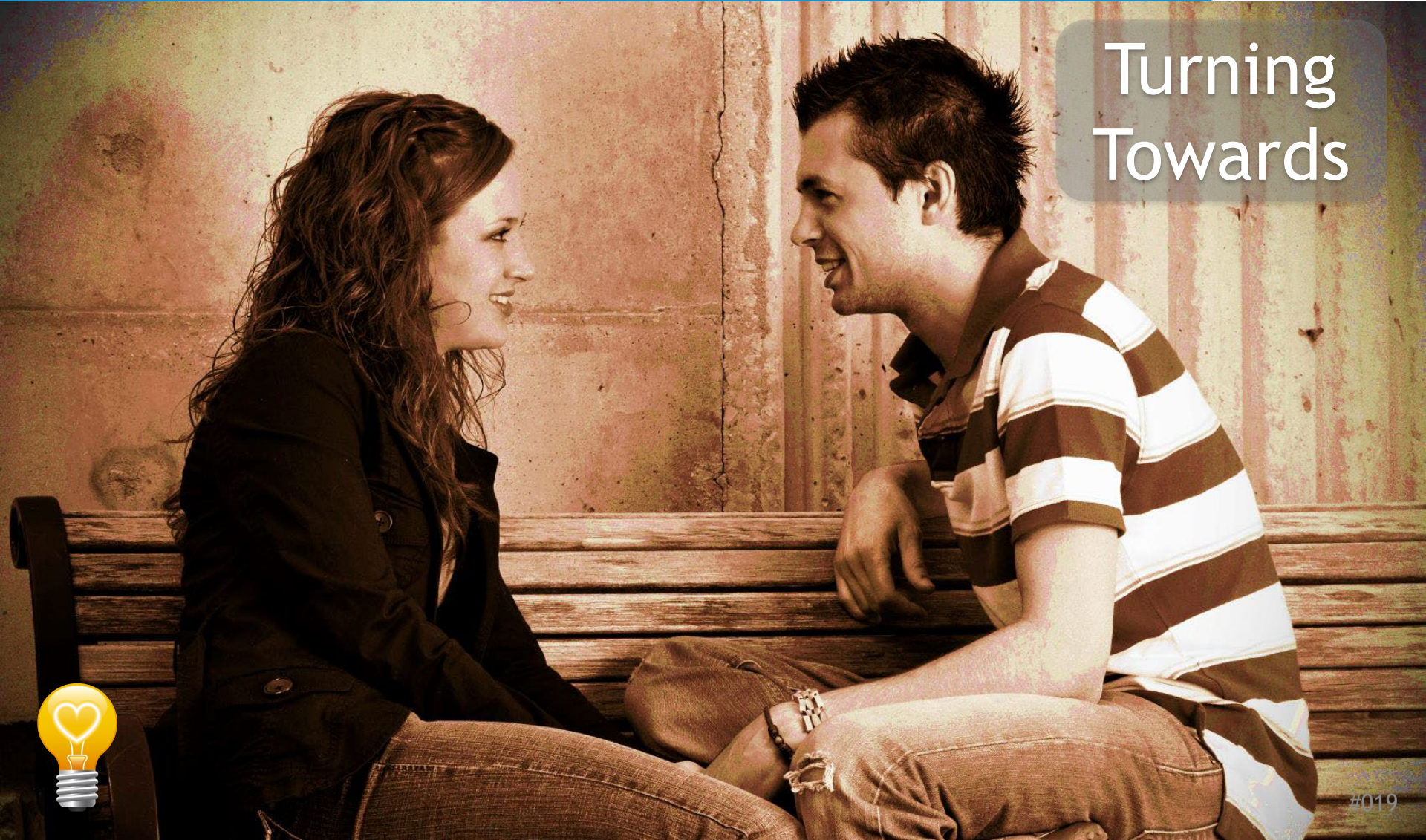
"Can't you see I'm busy right now?"

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Helpful Messages



Turning
Towards



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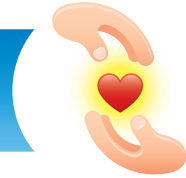
Ground Rules for Listening



- ✓ Give your full attention
- ✓ Use kind words and a kind tone of voice
- ✓ Don't interrupt or attempt to explain yourself
- ✓ Ask for clarification as needed
- ✓ Summarize what you believe your partner said and may be feeling to make sure you understand



Bids for Connection



Successful relationships have at least five times as many positive interactions as negative ones. One key to creating and maintaining more positive than negative interactions is by noticing a partner's "bid for connection." A bid is any type of request for connection to another person. Here are a few examples:

- Questions – "How was your day?" or "What do you want to do tonight?"
- Gestures – Reaching out to hold hands
- Facial expressions – Smiling or winking
- Touch – Hugging or kissing

Read through the following examples and think about how you could "turn toward" your partner.

Example 1:

Your partner walks in the door after a long day of work, sits down on the couch, and turns on the television without saying a word. How would you respond?

Example 2:

Your partner arrives home from work excited and happy. S/he was offered a higher paying job at work, but will have to work longer hours. How would you respond?

Now think about your relationship. When you are with your partner, how often do you give positive responses? What can you do to be more responsive to your partner's bids for connection?

Turning toward bids for connection help keep relationships positive and moving forward.

Action Plan

✓ How do you and your partner create and protect your time for each other?

✓ What is one new thing that you can do in the future?





ATTACH—Developing and maintaining your friendship with your partner helps build couple identity. Learning and growing together as a couple further establishes this friendship. Use these tips to *Share* together when developing couple friendship:

- Schedule meaningful time together as a couple doing something you both like.
- Figure out common interests and activities you share as a couple.
- Create couple traditions and rituals that promote togetherness.
- Set and work towards common goals with one another.
- Nurture positive interactions with your partner.
- Send clear and positive messages when communicating.
- Embrace and turn toward your partner's bids for connection instead of against.
- Envision yourselves as a "team"!



TAME—Dealing with differences in healthy ways can minimize friction among couples. Problems in healthy couple relationships may never be resolved, but they can be managed in effective ways. Here are a few tips on how to effectively *Manage* differences in your relationship:

- Understand and accept that there cannot always be an agreement between partners when in conflict.
- Share concerns with one another in a calm, respectful tone to avoid tension.
- Avoid criticism and defensiveness that could be insulting to your partner.
- Learn to stop conflict before it escalates out of control.
- When need be, take "time outs" during conflict, but make sure that you come back to talk.
- Soothe and support one another.
- Be open to forgiveness.
- Maintain emotional and physical safety with your partner.



ENGAGE—Engaging in a supportive, positive social network can be beneficial to any couple. Maintaining these relationships can act as safety nets that provide security to couples during good and challenging times. Here are some ways that couples can *Connect* their relationship to others:

- Grow and maintain extended family relationships.
- Develop and be a part of a supportive network of friends that can set and be examples to you as a healthy couple.
- Jointly engage in community organizations and services that can bring you and your partner together.
- Seek out resources to strengthen your relationship.

For additional information about healthy couple and marital relationships and other resources offered through Cooperative Extension, visit www.nermen.org.

Based on T.G. Futris & F. Adler-Baeder (Eds) (2013). *The National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model: Core Teaching Concepts for Relationship and Marriage Enrichment Programming*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. Available at <http://www.nermen.org/NERMEM.php>

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Develop and Maintain Your Friendship

One of the most important parts of a relationship is the friendship you have with each other. **SHARE** is about working together as a team, finding common interests, and enjoying each other's company. As a couple, you are constantly learning together, experiencing things together, and facing challenges together. **Just remember, a strong foundation of friendship will help you weather any storm.**



Fostering 5-minute Connections

- **Cuddle at the most important time of day.** Set the alarm five minutes early and cuddle with your partner in the morning. It can help keep you feeling close all day long.
- **Before you leave home, ask your partner if anything special is going on that day.** This lets your partner know that you are interested in him or her and care what's going on in their life. If something special is happening for your partner, check in with him or her during the day or in the evening.
- **Share what you like about each other.** Do this daily and do it frequently. Look for excuses to praise your partner. Don't take each other for granted. Your partner will feel loved and be more willing to work through any differences you may have.
- **Do small acts of kindness for one another.** Send your partner a card or e-mail just to say you love him or her, bring home a special treat, or do a chore that your partner usually does. The kindness you show to your partner will almost always be returned, and serving your partner will strengthen your bond.
- **Talk about the stresses and successes of your day.** Spend 5 minutes when you get home from work talking with your partner about the stressful things you may have experienced. Don't attack your partner with it; just share it with him or her. If you get the stress out of the way first, you will be able to enjoy the rest of your time together.



Get Creative!

Anniversaries are a big deal. Remember them and make them special. In addition to wedding anniversaries, couples can also celebrate the anniversary of your first date, the first time you kissed your partner, or the time you knew you were in love.

Did You Know?

Partners who show that they are committed to each other and who put the couple relationship before other relationships or disruptions are happier in their relationship than those who don't.

What and how much partners share with each other greatly affects the quality and value of their relationship. Partners who share common interests and values, are open and honest with each other, and invest in the friendship will be happier in the relationship. Couples who share more, argue less!

Couple Traditions that Strengthen the Relationship

- **Share Intimacy.** Plan romantic and intimate times with your partner.
- **Share Spirituality.** Shared religious or spiritual activities are a wonderful way to grow together as a couple.
- **Happy Anniversary!** Be creative with the anniversaries you celebrate and the ways you celebrate him or her.
- **"I Love You" Codes.** Develop subtle or indirect ways of letting your partner know you love him or her.
- **Frequently Connect With Your Partner.** Use brief phone calls, texts, or e-mails to connect with your partner throughout the day.
- **Do Your Partner's Favorite Thing.** Let your partner know you care by doing one of his or her favorite things together.
- **Think Partner First.** Think about and do the things that will show your partner that he or she is your #1 priority.
- **Have Couple and Family Meetings.** Businesses meet often to talk about profits, losses, and strategic planning. Invest time in your relationship to yield the same benefits.



Maintaining Friendship

- Being supportive
- Spending time together
- Being willing to resolve problems together
- Accepting influence from one another
- Sharing thoughts and feelings
- Trusting each other



Value

Attach

Tame

Engage

Take your relationship to the next level!

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Filters: Social Media Guard



Optional

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Non Verbal Communication



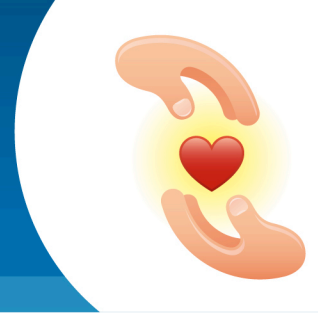
*The Importance of
Nonverbal Cues*

As told by "Friends"

Optional

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Guess that phrase!



1. Take out Relationship Wheel or turn to page 7 in workbook.
2. Volunteer couple will have video spotlighted or pinned.
3. The facilitator will provide the volunteer couple a phrase via private chat.
4. While muted, say the phrase directly into the video camera for all to see (but not hear).
5. Everyone “guess that phrase!”

