

# Welcome!



# Elevate

*Taking Your Relationship to the Next Level*

# ELEVATE

## Recap



#001



# ELEVATE

Your Relationship



Empower Yourself  
Lay the Foundation  
Enlighten  
Value  
Attach  
Tame  
Engage

# ENGAGE



EMPOWER  
YOURSELF



LAY THE  
FOUNDATION



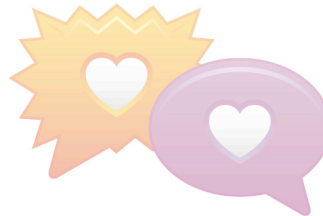
ENLIGHTEN



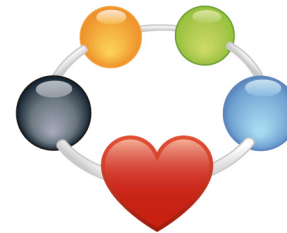
VALUE



ATTACH



TAME



ENGAGE



# ENGAGE

Engage in a support network!





# ENGAGE

Identify your support network!



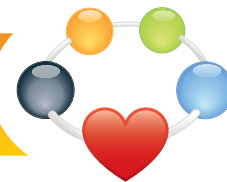
Who provides support to your relationship and family?

How have they supported you?





## Growing Family Connections



Extended family members offer love and support in good times and in bad. When we spend pleasant, positive time together with extended family, we build up a reserve of good feelings. When we are having some difficult times, those good feelings make it easier to reach out for help and also offer support to others.

**Who is in your extended family? What are some ways they offer you help and support with your relationship? What are some ways you help them? List your answers in the spaces below.**

People in my family:

Ways they help us:

Ways we help them:


**How does it feel when you receive help from your extended family?**


**How does this support help strengthen your relationship with your partner? Your children?**


**How do you feel when you offer support to your extended family?**


### Additional Tips

- Getting along with in-laws and relatives is not always easy. Family members can avoid hurting each other's feelings by not repeating past mistakes. Focus on the present and work together to build stronger relationships for the future.
- It is important for couples to talk about how much interaction they want with other relatives. Some couples like to spend more time with relatives, while other couples prefer to spend more time alone. Talk about your expectations with your relatives.
- Adults and children need opportunities to have fun and learn from extended family. Building and maintaining supportive relationships among family members and with people in the community is important for you and your children.

***Maintaining extended family relationships takes work,  
but it can strengthen your couple relationship!***



# ENGAGE

Identify support resources in your community!



What community resources  
can help support your  
relationship?



# ENGAGE

Serve others to strengthen your relationship!



What  
are  
some  
ways  
that you  
can  
provide  
service  
to  
others?



# ENGAGE

## Random Acts of Kindness



Random  
acts of  
Kindness  
tour

 NEW AT 5:30

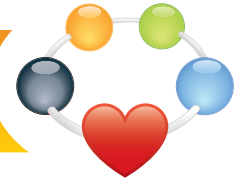
LOCAL COUPLE TO PROVIDE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS  
ROAD TRIP ACROSS THE COUNTRY







## Giving to Others



When an individual does a good deed, it feels good. It gives that person a sense of accomplishment. When a couple does a good deed together, it has even greater meaning. Doing things for others provides couples with a greater overall sense of connectedness, both to each other and to their community. It also gives partners more time together!

**What are some things others have done for you without being asked, or expecting anything in return? How did it make you feel?**

---

---

---

---

**Think of the last time you did something for someone else without needing to be asked. How did it make the other person feel? How did it make you feel?**

---

---

---

---

**What are some of your shared strengths or skills that you could put to use to help others?**

---

---

---

---

**If you already have engaged in volunteer work or service with your partner, what did you do and how did it make you feel?**

---

---

---

---

***Our lives are improved and our relationships are strengthened when we put our strengths to use by giving to and serving others.***

# ENGAGE

Connect to sources of meaning



# Action Plan

What do you plan to do to engage others to enrich your relationships?







**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:

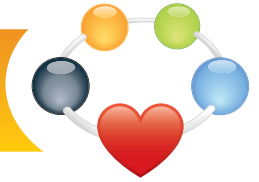
- Grow and maintain extended family relationships.
- Develop and be a part of a supportive network of friends that can set and be examples to you as a healthy couple.
- Jointly engage in community organizations and services that can bring you and your partner together.
- Seek out resources to strengthen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

For additional information about healthy couple and marital relationships and other resources offered through Cooperative Extension, visit [www.nermen.org](http://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>



# ENGAGE



## Engaging Support as a Couple

### “It Takes a Village”

We hear this phrase a lot, but what does it actually mean? It means that children develop in a complex system of family, friends, and experiences. Parents and couples need others that they can ask for help when raising children – don’t try to go it alone and don’t be afraid to ask friends and family for help.



### Why Connect?

The concept of CONNECT is about developing social support. Strong social connections help you to build strength, develop strong personal relationships, and most importantly, they provide support for you as a couple.

Couples who have strong relationships with the people around them report stronger, healthier, and more durable relationships.

When couples feel alone in their relationship (without friends to talk with) that is often when conflict arises. Having friends and family to confide in and to go to for advice relieves stress and can be an important resource for you.

### Finding meaning and purpose

Another part of connecting is finding a greater meaning and purpose in life. Think about what the greater purpose may be for your life, both individually, and as a couple.

For some, that might mean joining a church or synagogue. Faith-based groups can offer support and other resources. For others, it may mean joining a community or support group. Finding meaning and contributing to the community have been found to work wonders for relationships. Try to get out into the community and lend a hand every now and then!



## Finding support

Support comes from friends, family, and the community. Some examples of social support are:

- Your partner
- Friends & family
- Neighbors & the community
- Faith-based center
- Social organizations
- Schools
- Division of Social Services



Can you think of other examples of support in your own life? Are you making the most of your support by letting others help you?

The more you try to go at it alone, the harder life can be. We all need help from time to time; it doesn't make you a bad partner or a bad parent. In fact, you can be an even better mom/dad/partner just by asking for help!

## Gender differences

Women may need different types of support than men. Women tend to talk about their friendships more often than men. They depend on both their partner and their friends for emotional support. Men, on the other hand, tend to rely on their partner for emotional support and their friends for companionship. Do you see this trend in your own relationship?

## Steps to take to connect

- Let others help you.
- Keep up close relationships with your extended family. If they don't live close, talk on the phone, send text messages or email.
- Get involved with community groups that are supportive of your relationship.
- Think about what gives your life meaning – Your faith? Values? Community service? Find groups in your area with similar values and get involved.
- Take part together in activities and organizations outside of the family.
- Be a support for others in your life, including your external family members. Has someone you know just had a baby? Take them a meal. Or show a friend going through a hard time that you care by offering to babysit.
- Create traditions that add meaning to your relationship. Attend faith-based services or arrange weekly play dates to connect with other parents.



## Value

---

---

---

---

## Attach

---

---

---

---

## Tame

---

---

---

---

## Engage

---

---

---

---

***Take your relationship to the next level!***

# Elevate Your Relationship!



**Education will only work if it builds  
new and positive memories...  
use it or lose it!**

# Thank You!



**EMPOWER  
YOURSELF**



**LAY THE  
FOUNDATION**



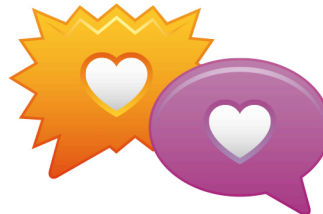
**ENLIGHTEN**



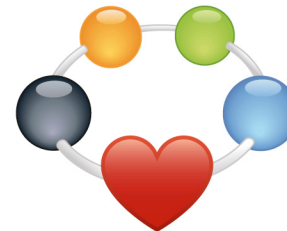
**VALUE**



**ATTACH**



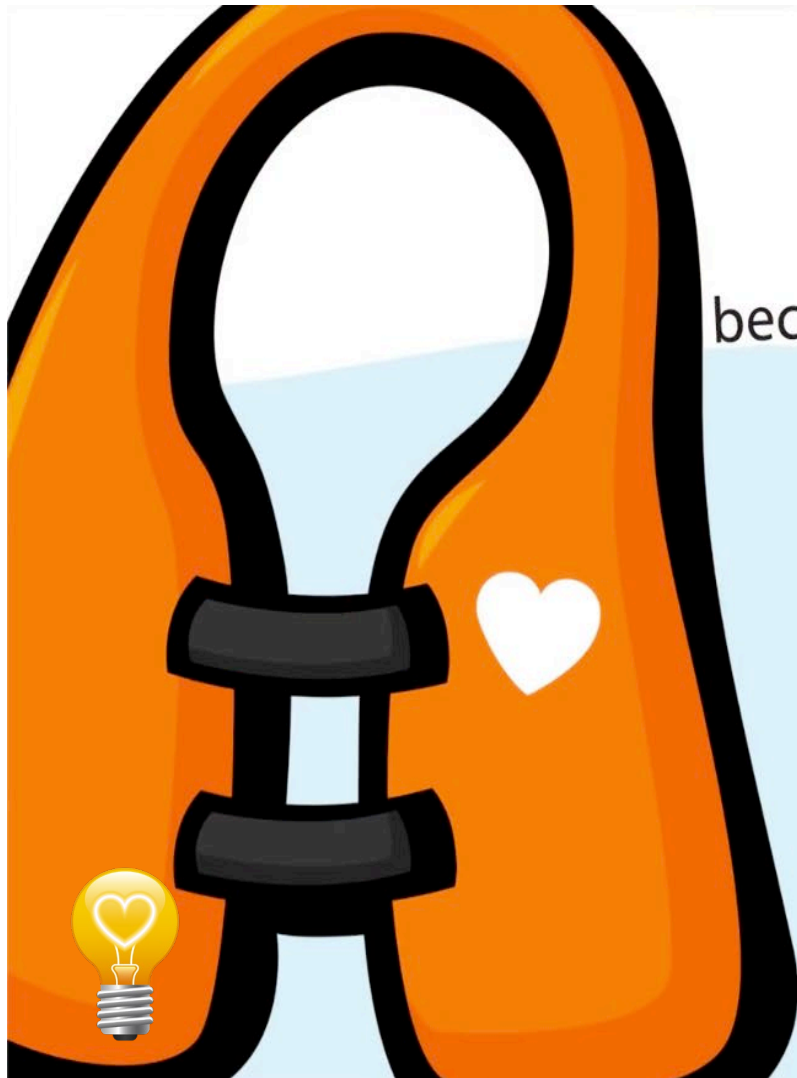
**TAME**



**ENGAGE**

# ENGAGE

## Random Acts of Kindness



because *kindness* keeps the world afloat

life  vest  
inside