

Maintaining a Successful Relationship between Couples

Many couples have problems maintaining a happy relationship before and after marriage. Since people have different experiences and perspectives in life it is difficult to avoid differences in opinion. When these disagreements become too serious between a man and a woman they can lead to arguments, fights and even divorce. There are three very important skills to practice in a relationship for building a successful future between married couples: open communication, empathy towards the other, and equality.

Open communication, or openness, is behavior which allows other people to understand the way we are (Montgomery.P22). This means that the boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife sees us the way we are without any secrets and without hiding our true self. In open communication it is very important that we express everything to our partner, with words or gestures, without changing the facts .(Montgomery.P22). This means that even in a situation where one of the two people in a relationship has made a mistake, they will tell the other person truthfully. For example, a man may have forgotten an important day, or the woman might have spent a lot of money without discussing it with her husband.

Another very important strategy is having empathy for the other person. Researchers have discovered that by having empathy in a relationship the disagreements in communication will decrease (Alder, Townie, and Rolls.P395). The way of practicing empathy towards another person is to think about a similar situation and try to understand how the person must feel. When a person indicates empathy to the other, they decrease the chance that the other person will feel that their "self-concept", the way they see themselves, is being threatened (Alder, Townie, and Rolls.P395). In one case, a man may feel disappointed if his wife or girlfriend lost the car keys; however, if he tries to understand how he would feel in this situation, it would be helpful to both of them, and would help to come up with a good solution to the problem.

A third important strategy is having equality between couples. The idea of superiority, that is, feeling that one has more power than the other, is a quick way to create a defensive environment between couples (Alder, Townie, and Rolls.P395). Therefore, it is much better to show equality towards each other. A sense of equality comes from the idea that while each person has better skills in some areas, we feel each person has equal value overall (Alder, Townie, and Rolls.P397). In this way we can make the other person feel confident and there will be fewer struggles for power. For example, the man in the relationship may be much better in contact sports but will assure his wife that her role in strategic sporting events is very important because she is better at tactics.

In conclusion, each person in a serious relationship must take time and energy to learn and practise the skills of open communication, empathy and equality in order to have success in their lives together. Every man and woman, whether married or dating will have differences in their personalities and abilities. Nonetheless, each of them needs to pay attention to being truthful to the other, understanding their feelings in the situation and respecting their differences in abilities. This way more relationships will last a long time.