



## Three Ways to Heal your Relationship

This list is designed to give you some ways that you can heal your relationship with your partner. While they may seem simplistic at first, these are important things to remember in order to maintain a relationship. Often people neglect to act until things are already on a swift downturn. These options will not fix all problems, but will help illuminate stress points within the relationship.

There is an amount of reciprocity that is necessary in all relationships. Once that equality is ignored, a couple starts to drift apart. It is also important to note that one person cannot fix a relationship. Both partners need to work together, whether they use the ideas on this list, or seek out other assistance.

### I. Communication

Communication is the most important part of any relationship. People often forget that communication involves both verbal and non-verbal expressions. Body language and your mannerisms can convey almost as much information to your partner as your words.

Everywhere you look, you hear about the importance of communication. The problem is that most people tend to keep communication brief and shallow. While it is a nice courtesy to ask your partner about their day, there is far more important ideas to convey through communication. It is important to have quality communication versus just quantity. Without communication how would either partner know what is going on with the relationship? Through communication a couple shares their thoughts, ideas, goals, dreams, emotions, fears, hopes, etc. It is little surprise that it is such an important part of a relationship.

*Here are some activities you can do to communicate with your partner:*

- **Turn off the TV** – Reserve some time together where you can talk with one another. Meals are the perfect time to share your thoughts and communicate. Try to have at least one meal a day together where you can talk without distractions.
- **Notes** – Leave notes for your partner. And no, this does not mean to tell your partner to do the dishes. Just say how you feel, how your day went, that you love him or her, or to thank your partner for something.



- **Ask your partner about his or her day** – This is a good way to check in with your partner. Not all days may be exciting, but the one day you fail to ask about may be the one day that something important happened.
- **Use active listening** – Make sure that you listen and ask for further details. By asking questions about what your partner is saying, it shows interest, and you may even learn some new things. Really focus on your partner, try not to think about what you are going to say.

## II. Quality Time

This might seem like an obvious idea, but spending time with your partner is very important in a relationship. The part that people neglect is what they are doing during those times together. When you are in a serious relationship with someone you generally spend a lot of time together. While it is good to spend any time together, the bulk of the time shared is simply spent going through daily tasks: doing chores, watching TV, sleeping together, eating meals together, etc. During these activities the focus is not on the relationship; it is merely two people going through their lives. With quality time together, the emphasis is placed back on the relationship.

A couple needs to regularly spend time together, as a couple. During these activities the focus is on having fun with one another, and enjoying the companionship of each other. Quality time should be seen as a “date” that way it is like recreating moments from the early period of the relationship.

*Here are some ways that you can spend quality time with your partner:*

- **Go on a date** – See a movie, go out to dinner, get some drinks, play pool, go bowling, go to a wine tasting, go to the beach, go to a park, go to a festival, go to a concert, go miniature golfing, go rock climbing, go to a play, etc. Go out and have fun together.
- **Share a new activity** – Go do something that both of you have thought about doing before. Take a class together, or work on a project together. By starting something new together, it is a shared experience and will give you a common goal and interest.
- **Dinner** – Have a nice formal dinner together. This does not mean take out on the couch. This means either nice take out from a restaurant or a meal that you two cooked together. Also no distractions allowed during the meal, definitely no TV. The purpose is for you to share the time with your partner and actually talk.

### **III. Showing Affection**

The longer that people are in a relationship, they fall into habits. The relationship itself becomes commonplace, and to some extent becomes taken for granted. It is at this point that one partner, or the other may notice that things have changed. Often a partner will say, “How come you don't do \_\_\_\_\_ like you used to?” While often this is seen as an accusatory remark, it usually represents an observation of a real change in the relationship. As the relationship ages, there is less fear of the relationship ending, so attention moves away from protecting the relationship and onto other interests. While it is important to have interests and activities outside of a relationship, they should not be pursued at the expense of the relationship.

Affection is an often neglected part of a relationship. In a way, it is a part of communication, but its importance in a relationship necessitates some additional focus. Through affection, a couple shows their love for one another; whether it is through words, physical acts, or exemplified through behaviors. Showing affection reaffirms the love between a couple. With affection, the couple is saying, “I still love you, and I'm happy to be with you,” even if those specific words are not being spoken. Without affection, a seed of doubt can infiltrate the relationship, leading to conflicts.

*Here are some ways that you can show affection toward your partner:*

- ***Say it*** – Sometimes simply saying “I love you” is the best way to show affection. It also means more when you are saying it without your partner saying it first.
- ***Give a gift*** – This does not mean that you have to spend hundreds of dollars on a new necklace or bracelet. A little token item can still mean something, especially if you write a little note along with it.
- ***Do something without being told*** – There are always those chores that people hate to do. There are also places your partner may like to go that you normally try to avoid. By either doing a chore or setting up an activity without being prompted by your partner, you are showing that you are aware of your partner's wants and needs.
- ***Notes or letters*** – A brief note or letter is an easy way to show your partner your feelings. Whether you do it on a piece of paper, over a text, or an email, as the saying goes, “it's the thought that counts.”