And They Lived Happily Ever After…

Ever wonder what makes a relationship successful?

By: Vanessa Ioriatti

Individuals may seek romantic partners that feel safe or excite them. Some studies focus on how opposites attract, while others focus on complementary personality types. Either way, attraction involves a complex interplay of histories, families, values, power dynamics, vulnerabilities, and personality. Perhaps most importantly, positive feelings and a sense of security greatly contribute to attraction and intimacy.

Attraction’s ability to last depends more on an intimate connection. While difficult to define, intimacy can be seen as having one’s need for understanding and security met. A mature relationship requires trust, respect, and support. Both partners should feel safe, secure, appreciated and loved.

A healthy relationship allows both individuals to be themselves and continue to grow. As college is a time for finding oneself and exploring the world, both partners need the freedom to change. Self-knowledge is the first key to a successful relationship. The couple must not center their lives on each other, but rather prioritize couple time within their full lives. Partners must balance their academic, occupational, familial, social, and romantic lives. As each partner grows the couple may continue in the same direction or take divergent paths. The idea of change is frightening enough. The idea of growing apart from a loved one can be terrifying. Instead, some couples may cling to stagnation and routine. However, a truly successful relationship promotes growth and change.

As part of the path to self-discovery, individuals must build self-esteem and heal past wounds. According to marriage and family therapist Maria Andrade (2000), your relationship is only as healthy as you are. Therefore, each partner must prioritize their own needs and deal with their emotions. Whether with a friend, a therapist, or oneself, an individual needs to address their depression, anxiety, or painful past.
The next step to a successful relationship is a willingness to invest time and energy into the relationship. First, couples must learn about each other and enjoy the fun and romance of the courtship process. When a couple decides to commit, they should create a shared vision of what they want in a relationship. This will help create a sense of togetherness and prevents against conflicting expectations.

To keep a successful relationship, couples must continue to keep both romance and intimacy alive. Each couple knows what truly makes them feel connected and happy. However, the following tips from Heart Magic can remind us to prioritize love and not take it for granted.

- Remember to play and laugh
- Acknowledge your partner’s thoughts and feelings
- Be polite: Use kindness and consideration
- Provide comfort and security
- Be truthful and keep your word
- Support each other during stress and transitions
- Deal with problems, misunderstandings, and disagreements
- Be forgiving and accept forgiveness: No one is perfect

For those of you interested in improving yourself or your relationships, please visit the University of La Verne’s Counseling Center. We offer both individual and couples therapy. We can help you build self-esteem, resolve past hurts, form a healthier more satisfying relationship, deal with an abusive relationship, and much more.

Please call us at (909) 593-3511, ext. 4831

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