

Tips For Connecting With Your Partner

The busyness and demands of everyday life can exacerbate challenges and dilemmas in any couple relationship. I frequently hear from many couples that they often have limited time for themselves as a couple, and when they do their mind is ticking away at the incessant 'to do' list, or they feel too exhausted from their daily demands to make the necessary effort for 'refueling' and nourishing their couple relationship.

Here are some suggested ways in which you and your partner can pay attention to connection:-

Enjoying some calm time together when tension and conflict is high

- Commit to finding 20 to 30 minutes to sit and enjoy some conflict free banter/ conversation with each other
- Ensure that you are unlikely be distracted e.g. mobile phones off/on silent
- Choose an environment where you can both relax such as in a quiet room, walk in a quiet area, in a favorite coffee bar etc.
- Keep your conversation to 'safe' areas i.e., not anything connected to tensions or disagreements
- The purpose is to enjoy being in each other's company
- Try to do this as often as possible so you have some respite from tensions and ongoing dilemma/s

Giving each other some positive and appreciative feedback

Find some quiet uninterrupted time together, ideally at least 30 minutes and give each other feedback on:-

- Something specific about your partner that you find really attractive and/or appreciate

- Something specific your partner has said or done for you recently that you really appreciate – this could be something they often do which means a lot to you
- Something specific that you would really like the two of you to do more of in your daily life – *focus on this being manageable*

This may show your partner how you notice and appreciate them. It also lets your partner know what they do that most makes a difference to you, and vice versa. I often hear partners express surprise at hearing this feedback “*Oh I just always make a cup of tea for us both if I’m making one for myself, but I didn’t know how much that means to him*”.

Exploring what could make a difference for feeling more connected

Choose one or two of the following questions to explore and discuss with each other when you have some uninterrupted time together:-

- Can you give me an example of when you felt most safe to be your genuine, most imperfect self with me?
- Do I show you that I appreciate you?
- How do you know when I am really enjoying spending time with you?
- Do you ever feel that I have decided how you are going to react to something rather than actually listening to you?
- When do you feel most desired by me?
- Do you feel like I have your back?
- When do you feel most and least listened to by me?