

Building strong relationships

August 2014 Newsletter



What does it take to make and keep a couple's relationship strong? One factor is each person's ability to "grow with the flow."

The flow of life includes growth and change

What would life be like if we never changed our ways after the ages of 5, 10 or 20? What would relationships be like if they stayed in the same patterns forever?

We're growing and changing all the time. So are our relationships. A critical part of being a couple is adapting to changes together.

Roll up your sleeves and get ready to work at it

Do some relationships look effortless to you? Don't be fooled. Every lasting relationship takes a lot of work.

What can you do to make your relationship strong? Here are some tips:

- **Be flexible.** Forget about winning and losing when it comes to disagreements. Instead, be willing to give a little and get a little so you and your loved one can both be happy.
- **Expect ups and downs.** No relationship is 100% thrilling – or 100% boring. Expect times that are good, bad and just okay.
- **Learn to forgive.** Grudges are toxic. They infect relationships with anger and resentment. Forgiveness releases bad feelings and allows for a fresh start. And remember: It's okay to ask for forgiveness when you need it, too.

- **Connect with others.** Boost your skills and strengths as a couple by socializing with other couples, family and friends.
- **Break out of the norm.** Give yourselves the gift of spontaneous fun. Try a new activity together or enjoy a spur-of-the-moment adventure.
- **Make time for each other.** Set aside time every day when you can tell each other about your thoughts and feelings. Even if you have kids — or, rather, especially if you have kids — carve out some adult time. As a couple, you're key to keeping the family stable. Make sure you give and get the attention you deserve as often as possible.
- **Be a safety zone for growth.** Allow yourself and your partner the freedom to pursue individual activities and goals in life. This won't detract from your relationship. It'll add to it. As each of you grow, you'll have more to share and give to the relationship.
- **Express your love.** Why keep it a secret? Tell and show your loved one that you care in some small way every day.