

# Achieving relationships that survive and thrive

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Yes, happy couples do argue and disagree. Every couple has their ups and downs.

Why? Because life is full of change and challenge. Each “bend in the road” requires that partners communicate and cooperate. Each obstacle takes patience and hard work from both people.

## Tips for keeping relationships strong

So how do couples survive — and even thrive — through good times and bad? Here are some tips<sup>1</sup>:

- **Accept.** Differences often attract people to each other. We may be introverted and they’re extroverted; they hate confrontation and we’re always ready to stand up for ourselves.

Initially, we may be drawn to these differences in style and personality. Later, those same things can lead to conflict.

Remember that no two people are alike. Find ways your similarities and differences can contribute to a strong partnership.

- **Appreciate.** It’s easy to harp on things that annoy us about our spouses, partners or friends. How about the things we really like about them? Look for the positives. Express your admiration out loud to each other.

- **Support.** No couple lives in a vacuum. There are friends, family, jobs, money and daily routines to deal with. Try to see your partner’s point of view during stressful times. Decide together how to handle situations that affect you individually or as a couple.
- **Spend time together.** Shared experiences help cement relationships. Time together might include athletics, travel, physical intimacy or just sitting side by side to read the newspaper or watch TV. Nothing fancy required.
- **Play fair.** Relationships can’t thrive in unhealthy environments. Physical and/or emotional violence are never okay.
- **Communicate.** If you keep your feelings bottled up, you’re more likely to explode at some point. Make time to talk about problems and goals. Focus on finding solutions that meet everyone’s needs. Be willing to compromise. Remember to truly listen to each other.

Finding love may seem like luck or an act of fate. But keeping it alive and well takes commitment and ongoing effort.

<sup>1</sup>[www.socialworktoday.com](http://www.socialworktoday.com)