

Relationships are a team sport



What does it take to make and keep a couple's relationship strong? One factor is each person's ability to be a team player. To keep relationships strong and alive, both partners need to play for the same team — theirs.

Roll up your sleeves and be ready to work at it

Do some relationships look effortless to you? Don't be fooled. A lasting relationship takes ongoing effort. Why? We're all changing constantly. Partners need to be resilient, dedicated and open to growth.

What else can you do to keep your team 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 experiences 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. 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 team.
- **Show your love.** Tell and show your loved one that you care every day.

Go team, go!

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