

Lasting love: good luck or hard work?

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Happy, loving couples never argue or disagree. True or false?

The answer: false!

Even the most well-matched couples have their ups and downs. Why? Because life is always presenting new challenges. Each requires cooperation, communication, patience and hard work from both partners in the relationship.

Tips for keeping the “magic” alive¹

So how do couples survive — and even thrive — through the good times and the bad? Here are some tips:

- **Accept.** Differences often attract people to each other. We may be introverted and they’re extroverted; we hate confrontation and they’re ready for an argument. 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 that both your similarities and differences make you 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? Seek out the positives. Express your admiration out loud to each other.
- **Support.** No couple lives in a vacuum. There are friends, family, jobs and other daily hassles to deal with. Try to see your partner’s side in the stresses of daily living. Decide together how to handle situations that affect you individually or as a couple.

- **Spend time.** Shared experiences help bond relationships. Time together might include athletics, travel, physical intimacy or just sitting side by side to read the Sunday newspaper or watch TV. Nothing fancy required — just a bit of time.
- **Be kind.** Healthy relationships can’t thrive in unhealthy environments. Physical and/or emotional violence are simply not acceptable in caring connections.
- **Communicate.** If you keep your feelings bottled up, you’re more likely to explode at some point. Make time to talk about plans, problems and goals. Be open to compromise. Remember to truly listen to each other.

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

¹socialworktoday.com