



Re-Discovering the Lost Art of Intimacy

By

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True intimacy doesn't happen by accident. It takes time, energy, and a dedicated effort to create intimacy. Listed below are some of the steps that you can take to make relationships that last.

Choose Wisely

Remember that not everyone wants intimacy. You can't make someone want to be with you or want to be emotionally open. There, often, is nothing more frustrating in a relationship than having to do all the work to keep the relationship going. Keep in mind that some people are simply unwilling or unable to be open to meaningful relationships. If you want intimacy, you have to choose a partner that has the same goals. Your chances of creating lasting intimacy improve dramatically if you choose a partner that wants to create an honest, loving relationship.

Commit To Creating Intimacy

To develop true intimacy, you have to give your relation-

ships the best that you have to offer, not just the "leftover" energy or time you have after you have fulfilled all of your other obligations. Relationships tend to grow apart when we focus our energy everywhere but toward our partner. It is, therefore, important to create moments where you eliminate all distractions and instead bring "peak energy" and focus into the relationship. The goal is to be completely present with your partner so that you can share meaningful moments together. Remember, in order to maintain intimacy, you have to commit ongoing time and energy to the relationship.

Commit To Your Own Personal Growth

We all have our own blind spots and baggage that we bring from previous relationships or past experiences in life. These blind spots often get in the way of us creating meaningful relationships. It is, therefore, important to identify and acknowledge your own flaws and work through those issues that

prevent you from having the type of relationships you want.

Commit to Your Partner's Personal Growth

Committing to your partner's growth can best be summarized by the following statement: "How can I help you get what you want out of life?" By committing to their growth, you help your partner thrive.

Commit To Resolve Conflicts

Healthy relationships resolve conflicts in a way where both partners feel understood and validated. Intimacy, on the other hand, is destroyed by unresolved conflicts. If you sweep conflicts under the rug or never really resolve arguments, you create a relationship where mistrust and hurt replace warmth and support. To create lasting relationships both partners have to commit to resolving conflicts and to creating a mutual feeling of trust and support. Relationships tend to thrive when both people feel understood and validated.

New Dimensions Can Help If You or Someone You Know Is:

- Depressed or Suicidal
- Stuck and having difficulty making changes
- Dealing with trauma
- Struggling with Panic Attacks
- Having difficulty working or going to school
- Struggling with addictions or substance abuse
- Cutting or doing other self-destructive behaviors
- Struggling with anger issues
- Struggling to get medications stabilized

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The Benefits of Turning off the Electronics

Electronics are an important part of most people's lives today. Unfortunately, these tools can become so consuming that they can disrupt our attempts to create meaningful relationships. For example, do you really need to answer text messages during conversations? Think about the message this sends to the person you are with.

Turn off the electronics and engage with the people around you. It is easier to focus on conversations when the distractions of the TV, computers and cell-phones have been eliminated. Try going an entire day without your electronics and spend the time with someone you care about. You might be surprised.

Understanding Communication Styles of Men and Women

Men and Women tend to have different communication styles. Neither style is right nor wrong, they are simply different. While each individual's style may vary, understanding these basic differences between men and women can lead to more effective communication.

In general, men tend to process feelings and thoughts internally. Men typically analyze information, process thoughts and feelings about that information and then develop a conclusion

prior to discussing their thoughts with others. As a result, men frequently only share the summary of their feelings.

In general, women tend to process feelings and thoughts externally. As thoughts and feelings occur, women tend to express them verbally. As they talk about their feelings they begin to clarify them, which helps them formulate their conclusion. As a result, women tend to share more of the details of their feelings.

To improve communication:

- Men can volunteer more info. about their feelings without being prodded.
- Men can listen without trying to fix their partner.
- Women can recognize the importance men place on their summary of feelings.
- Women can verbalize to men when they simply need to vent.

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Tips for Effective Listening

1. **Concentrate** - Focus on what is being said. Turn off the TV, radio, phones, etc. to minimize the distractions.
 2. **Limit Your Own Talking** - You can't talk and listen at the same time.
 3. **Don't Interrupt** - Let your partner finish their thoughts.
 4. **Turn Off Your Own Worries** - Don't let your own worries prevent you from focusing on what your partner is trying to communicate.
 5. **Listen For Ideas - Not Just Words** - Don't get lost in the details of the story. Listen for the main ideas of the story and try to understand why those ideas are important to your partner.
 6. **Listen For The Themes In The Examples That Are Given** - Your partner may describe several examples of their feeling. Try to connect the different examples together by listening for the common themes within the examples.
 7. **Don't Jump To Conclusions** - Don't assume you know what your partner is trying to communicate. Let them finish their thoughts.
 8. **Ask Questions To Clarify Meaning** - If you get mixed messages or don't understand the intended communication, ask questions.
 9. **Paraphrase** - After your partner has finished talking, paraphrase what you heard. This will help ensure that you have understood the intended communication.
 10. **Summarize** - If you have understood your partner, you should be able to summarize their intended communication within a single sentence. If it takes more than this, you have probably missed the meaning they were trying to communicate.
- 11. Remember The Goal Of Listening Is To Understand**

How To Win An Argument

Many people try to win an argument by proving that they are "right" or by demonstrating how "wrong" their partner is. While "winning" the argument in this way might be initially satisfying, it tends to create resentments in your partner over time. These resentments frequently become the fuel for future arguments. As a result, over time, the arguments can become more heated and destructive as both people commit to "winning" the arguments.

Healthy relationships, on the other hand, resolve conflicts in a way that creates closeness rather than resentments. In fact, the best way to win an argument in a relationship is to create mutual understanding. Some strategies to create this outcome are listed below.

Create An Atmosphere Of Mutual Respect

Without feeling respected, it is hard for us to communicate openly. If you want honest dialogue you have to treat each other with respect and kindness. Everyone wins when there is an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Seek First To Understand Before Seeking To Be Understood

The more you understand why your partner thinks and feels the way they do, the more you will be able to come up with solutions that actually resolve the arguments. Solutions that only address your feelings leads down the path of resentments. Seek to understand what your partner needs and include it as part of the resolution.

Validate Feelings First

When trying to resolve an argument, it is important to validate the feelings your partner has before trying to correct any misperceptions or misunderstandings. Telling someone their feelings are wrong doesn't help them see your side. It only makes them feel misunderstood. Acknowledge their feelings first before trying to communicate your perspective.

Stay Focused on the Intended Outcome

Remember, the way to win an argument is to create mutual understanding. This mutual understanding allows you to find solutions that work.



Rules For Fair Fighting

- No cussing
- No calling each other names.
- No yelling
- No throwing or hitting
- Argument stays focused on one topic until that issue is resolved.
- Look into each other's eyes while talking.
- Cool off if things become heated and then try again.