

## **Ten Tips for Couples**

1. Notice what you appreciate about your partner, and tell them.
2. Make time for your relationship -- every day.
3. Create more positive moments in the relationship; Most healthy couples average 5 positive interactions for every negative interaction.
4. Never stop courting each other. Take time for romance and special relationship moments.
5. Slow Down during times of disagreement. Learn to calm yourself down during times of conflict.
6. Learn strategies to restore the relationship when conflict does occur. All couples have conflict. Learn to repair your relationship after the fight.
7. Don't put off working on your relationship if there is a problem (most couples endure an average of 6 years of unhappiness before seeking help).
8. Avoid the 4 common negative relationship patterns: Criticism, defensiveness, withdrawal, and contempt (Gottman, 1999).
9. Separate the solvable from the unsolvable issues in the relationship. Many couples fight pointlessly over issues that are ultimately unsolvable.
10. Discuss your "life dreams" with your partner. Make sure you know your partner's life dreams; make sure they know yours.