



Leaning into Love: Building Strong Relationship Bonds

Strategies to Build Love and Friendship – In order to get the benefits of a loving relationship, you must be willing to lean in and focus on the act of giving love.

- **Remember Your Love Story** – Each partner writes or remembers out loud the story of the relationship beginning. What attracted you? What was your experience? What did you feel and how did each of you behave?
- **Fondness and Admiration**-Think about, notice, and communicate, on a daily basis, the positive aspects you appreciate in your partner. Think of these qualities when you are together and apart. This can have a powerful impact on your bond and your ability to weather difficulties.
- **Build the Friendship** – Most relationships don't end due to conflict. They end due to a loss of connection and friendship. On a daily basis, reestablish the friendship. Ask them something about themselves. Be curious.

Communication Strategies

All relationships have conflict. It's how you manage the conflict that matters!

- **Start by assuming something positive.** For example, "I know you work hard at work but the housework is getting overwhelming to me and I could really use your help with it."
- **Pay attention to your tone.** Be polite "Honey can we talk for a minute..."
- **Describe what makes you upset, without judgment.** "I know you didn't intend to, but you forgot to take out the garbage as you promised."
- **Don't use "you always" or "you never" when sharing a complaint.**
- **Be specific about the complaint.** Don't pile up a bunch of complaints. Make the complaint a one-time specific event.



- **Don't just identify the problem. Identify what you want or need.** "I was disappointed that you made plans with friends for the weekend. I would really like to have some time with you alone."
- **Learn to recognize flooding.** If you or your partner are so emotionally stressed by the conversation that you can't listen or have a reasonable response, both of you would be better off at that point to take a break until you calm down.

Invest in "The Magic 5 Hours a Week"

Parting: Say goodbye. Find something out about their day ahead

2 minutes a day x 5 workdays = 10 minutes

Reunion: Stress reducing conversation

20 minutes a day x 5 workdays = 1 hr 40 minutes

Admiration and Appreciation: Find a way to communicate genuine admiration or appreciation

5 minutes a day x 7 days = 35 minutes

Affection: Touch, hold, a kiss before bed and let go of small irritations

5 minutes a day x 7 days = 35 minutes

Date night: Relaxing time to connect, talk, and enjoy one another.

2 hours a week

Grand Total = 5 hours a week can keep a partnership on track

This presentation is based on the work of John M. Gottman Ph.D. and Nan Silver. Read further about his powerful strategies for building strong relationship bonds in, *The Seven Principles for Making a Marriage Work*.