

Maintaining A Successful Relationship

(advice from Dr. Phil)

Have a solid friendship.

"Ask yourself what kind of friend you are being to your mate," Dr. Phil says. He asks Chris and Stacy what they enjoy doing with their friends, whether it be talking about silly things or sharing a good joke together. He then advises them to apply that same openness to their own relationship. "If you want a good friend, be a good friend," he suggests.

Meet each others' needs.

"The success of a relationship is a function of the extent to which it meets the needs of two people," Dr. Phil explains. He tells Chris that he needs to discover what Stacy's needs are. "Maybe she needs a soft place to fall that day or she needs a shoulder to cry on," he says. He tells Stacy that she doesn't always need to agree with her husband, but she should figure out his needs, whether it's saying that she's proud of him, or that he looks nice that day.

Set specific goals.

"Wake up each morning and say, 'What can I do today to advance the ball?'" Dr. Phil advises. Even small things will accumulate over time and make a difference. Find a quiet moment each day and come up with a specific goal to improve your relationship, whether it's calling your spouse during the day just to say hi, or telling your mate that you love him or her more often. Make a conscious effort.

Get back to basics.

"The idea is to have some concept of what a marriage and a partnership is supposed to be and start doing those things," Dr. Phil urges. Write down your definitions of a successful relationship and live up to those definitions. Focus on the fundamental things that are going to make a difference in the long run.

Take responsibility.

You can't control the way your spouse acts in your relationship, but you can control how you react in negative situations. "You have to take 100 percent responsibility for what you're doing in a relationship," Dr. Phil says. "Decide what you believe and hold to be true, and conduct yourself 100 percent consistent with that."

Turn the negatives into a to-do list.

Turn negative aspects of your relationship into positive actions. For example, if you don't have fun with your partner, you need to make a list of enjoyable activities you can do together. Ask yourself, what would make your view on this aspect change?

Obtained from: <http://drphil.com/articles/article/142>