



## Partners in Parenting: Tips For Keeping Your Relationship Strong

**The way we relate to those close to us has a huge impact on our child's development.**

- Children learn much more from our actions than from our words. They learn what a healthy relationship looks like from the way we interact with our partner every day.
- Many couples put their relationship with each other at risk by thinking, "as long as I am taking good care of my child, nothing else matters."
- Couples that are satisfied with their relationships make taking care of themselves and their relationship a top priority, with the children very close behind.

***The two keys for a satisfying relationship that lasts a lifetime are strengthening your friendship and working on the ways you handle conflict!***

### Strengthen Your Friendship

- **Create Love Maps:** These are the mental models we make of our partner world. Spend time and energy developing an increased awareness of your partner's daily life, hopes, dreams, and concerns.
- **Share affection:** Regular caring and non-sexual touching are some of the most powerful ways to feel belonging in your relationship.
- **Express empathy:** Listen without fixing. Try to see the situation through your partner's eyes, not with your own judgment.
- **Express appreciation** on a daily basis.
- **Create a positive perspective:** Believe in your relationship and give your partner the benefit of the doubt when things go wrong.
- **Spend special time together:** Acknowledge parting and coming back together each day. Plan date nights, date days, and weekend getaways.

### Work On The Way Your Handle Conflict

- **Edit yourself:** Happy couples avoid saying every critical thought that pops in their head when discussing touchy subjects.
- **Use a softened start-up:** Arguments often start up because one partner escalates by making a critical remark. Happy couples bring up problems gently and without blame.
- **Make a repair:** Happy couples have learned how to repair the situation before an argument gets out of control. Slow down, back up, or yield to win.
- **Exit an argument:** Happy couples have learned to take a twenty-minute break when emotions get elevated and come back to the topic when both people are calm. Learn how to soothe yourself during these breaks.

***"The real cradle that holds the baby is the emotional climate between the parents"***

**- John Gottman**