

How To Make Any Relationship Better

Julie Hryniewicz-Hache -- Monday, January 15, 2007, 10:30AM



As a result of a comment from one of my readers, I am inspired to bring you my thoughts and experience in the realm of relationships.

Completely messing up my first marriage and ending up in a bitter divorce, my first crack at the marriage thing is NOT anything at all to emulate!! (I am just so absolutely grateful that we ended up creating

our beautiful daughter, who brings so much joy to our lives.) I now; however, have new information that appears to be working out!

I must admit that my vision for a perfect marriage came from fairy-tale endings in books, movies, and television. At a young age, I formed the belief that a man would come and sweep me off my feet and make everything all better - the propaganda! I suppose that this belief took its toll on my own life, because I always expected someone else to "make me happy". Of course, in hindsight, I realize that we are the only ones with the power to do that and it is unfair for anyone to be expected to fill this order.

Most relationships do start with romance and fireworks; however, it is unrealistic to think that it will always be this way, without any glitches. A couple of days on a camping or road trip together and you get to know things about each other that you would rather not! To have expectations that everything will always be "happily ever after" only sets us up for disappointment because every relationship goes through a period of adjustment and growth.

It was interesting that once I began to recognize patterns in my two main love relationships, I realized that I was the only person in common with both. It was a wake up call for me because early disagreements resembled each other. Same situation but two different guys! So, where did the problem lie? Yup, the problem was me! Being the needy, insecure, and sensitive person that I was, I would spread my drama to anyone in my path.

It seemed that I pushed away anyone who dared to love me, because of my chaos. The repeated patterns only reinforced my own insecurities and then I went on a downward spiral of depression and further frustration with my life. I had to face that if I wanted things to be different, then I had to examine my roots, embrace the good things, and decide to start with a clean slate. This process, in my early thirties, was grueling; however, so worth the effort. I now live in bliss in my marriage because I truly appreciate what I have and I feed the relationship every day with respect, gratitude, compassion, and kindness.

The difference between my first marriage and my marriage now, is that I have changed in so many ways. My perspective, my outlook, and my attitude about relationships has been completely revamped by my experiences. I have learned to communicate better, convey my feelings without blame, clearly identify my needs, and truly appreciate the positive in the relationship. There is no use in living in guilt over my past because it is behind me and I can't change it - I can only focus on right now and the things I do have control over.

Considering the number of divorces and unhappy marriages that are evident all around us, many are uncertain how to improve their situation, feel more joy in their relationships, or make things work. It is absolutely possible and so worth the effort. You can mold and create your relationship starting today, regardless if you have been married for 75 years or newly dating. Your relationship will be a direct result of your effort, attention, and attitude.

I believe it was Dale Carnegie, in one of his books, who stated that most people are walking around with an invisible sign around their neck that says. "Make me feel important". Human beings crave love, attention, appreciation, recognition, care, and concern. It is a human need that is essential to achieve true enlightenment and personal peace. The problem is that with the chaotic society we are currently experiencing, we are dealing with too many of our own issues and life dramas to pay close attention to anyone else's emotional needs.

Due to the fact that we have been automated out of having to move at all to function and our indulgence in the fast food craze, many of us are battling weight issues, depression, and illness. With the neglect that is going on in primary relationships, due to these issues and the hectic pace of our world, other family members are turning to drugs, alcohol, anti-depressants, crime, and other addictions to cope with the void they are feeling. The predominant negativity of our media then fuels the bad

moods and we perpetuate a society full of anger, sadness, hatred, revenge, and revolt. Crime, violence, depression, and war will never go away unless individuals get healthier.

That being said, we do have the power to change the world, simply by changing ourselves. When an individual gets happier, they rub off on their spouse, their children, their family, their workplace, and their community. A union will often get better when one person releases the negativity in their life, decides to change the perspective in which they see the world, and acknowledge the things in the relationship that are good. Since you can't change anyone else, all you can do is work on yourself. Miraculously, people around you then seem to get happier too!

The simplest way to change anything is to shift the focus from what is going wrong to what is working. Decide to give attention to the good stuff, instead of the bad. Instead of complaints about yourself and others, give compliments, acknowledgement, and appreciation. When you want something done, request in a positive way, write it down, and talk about how you can assist each other to get it accomplished together. When you are pleased about something, you or someone else is doing, give it attention, praise, and make a big deal of the triumphs.

People repeat behaviors that feel good - if they are being nagged, guilted into things, or receive complaints about their effort, they will not want to repeat it. On the other hand, when they receive smiles, hugs, praise, thanks, and appreciation for what they are doing, they are more likely to repeat the action. Relationships are about a cycle of giving. One gives, the other gives, and both receive. When one takes, the other takes, who benefits? Eventually the relationship is depleted of the critical energy it needs to sustain itself.

Just as in a new union, any successful relationship (whether a romantic or otherwise) is a process of giving of yourself, your time, and most of all, your undivided attention. It is not necessarily about flowers or gifts - I much prefer a hug, a note, having my car cleaned off, a load of laundry done, or fruit cut up for the fruit salad. I now tally what I give, instead of what I receive. I focus on my effort to feed and fuel the relationship. I express gratitude every day on our chalkboard, in notes, in words, and actions. It is paying off!

Life is too short to wait for someone else to make you happy, you are in charge of that - you will achieve that by giving of yourself. You deserve to be blissfully happy in your relationships and this is possible! Are there patterns in your relationships? What things about your relationships are

you grateful for? You create your own reality - may as well make it good!
Have a great day...

***"Keep what is worth keeping - and with a breath of kindness blow
the rest away."***
Dinah Mulock Craik