

Communication in intimate relationships



What makes relationships successful? What kind of process do we go through to create an intimate relationship? What are some of the problems we encounter during them and how should we go about solving those issues? The questions above are some of the subjects I am going to tackle in this paper. Relationships can be very rewarding if the good outweighs the bad. The success in an intimate relationship depends highly upon effective communication. There is not only one specific way for couples to communicate, because each relationship is different. It is important to know good forms of communication to improve the quality our relationships.

Date night is the movie I chose to compare my subject to a movie. In this movie, a couple is having

After being in a relationship for three years, I feel as though my relationship with my boyfriend is fairly successful. What makes a relationship successful? In my opinion, the following are important qualities of an intimate relationship: Friendship, love, respect, compassion, and passion among others. Friendship is a good basis for any relationship. I don't believe a couple has to start from friendship, but from what I have seen, it is important for a friendship to develop. While spending a lot of time together, it is important to have similar likes and interests, as friends do, to keep the fire going. Love is an obvious importance to an intimate relationship, because it is needed to endure the hard times of a relationship, as well as the easy times. Compassion is necessary when a person in a relationship is having a hard time and needs support; it is very important for a couple to support each other. Respect is very important to me, because I expect a mutual respect between my boyfriend and I to keep our boundaries set, and to keep

us both happy. Our thoughts and opinions are important to each other. Every relationship has its own priorities in which different values are more important, as Anderson explains in more complex terms:

“ Personal predispositions of one person will interact with the intimacy displays of another to produce unique individual valences of the intimacy displays of their partner” (52).

The process to form a strong bond in a relationship takes a good amount of time. They differ couple to couple and take the different steps at different speeds. Floyd lists Mark Knapp’s model of relationship development as the following: initializing stage, experimenting stage, intensifying stage, integrating stage, and bonding stage. The initializing stage is meeting for the first time (342-345). After the initial meeting comes the experimenting stage, which is where two people get to know each other through conversation (such as figuring out what kind of music, movies, and activities someone likes.) Next is the intensifying stage, which is when two people go from just having occasional conversations, to being closer friends. The intensifying stage may also include hanging out in groups of friends or only with each other. The integrating stage is when other people start to notice your relationship and that commitment has developed. The last stage is bonding, which is when a relationship is announced to everyone, and everyone acknowledges the two as a couple.

My last experience with the model of relationship development was quick. I met my boyfriend and four days later, we started dating. We got to know each other quickly, because we spent a lot of the summer together, directly

after meeting, and we had many common interests. The experimenting stage occurred quickly, and we became closer friends in our quickly started relationship. The intensifying and integrating stage came pretty much at the same time. Everyone knew that we liked each other and were in a relationship almost right away. Bondage for us was very natural and everyone accepted us as a couple, and still does.

What are some ways to improve our relationships? Research says that for a satisfying relationship, there should be five positive behaviors for every one negative and that unsatisfying relationships have only one positive behavior for every negative (Floyd.) In my personal relationship, my time together with my boyfriend is focused on forming at least five of those positive behaviors. Most days, we have many more than five positive behaviors for every one negative behavior, and I believe that does directly correlate with happiness in our relationship. Sorgen, on her WebMD feature says “ It’s the rare couple that doesn’t, sooner or later, run into a few bumps in the road.” According to Sorgen, to improve communication, couples should do the following: make time, set up rules, listen to each other, and make sure to argue in private if you can’t keep your voice down. I feel like my relationship follows these guidelines. We make sure no matter how busy we are, we find time to spend together, and talk subjects out, if we need to. If we do get into arguments, we have rules, so we don’t become too mean. We also try our best to listen to each other whether we disagree or not, and we definitely don’t make a scene in public. Personally, being sensitive to another’s emotions and feelings is important to do; that is a problem I have in my relationship. When he doesn’t agree with what I am saying, he becomes

rude. I am an emotional girl, and my feelings are hurt easily and he knows what to say to get me to stop talking. It would help us a lot if he would calm down when I get emotional, and talk calmly instead of getting angry. This would prevent us from saying words we don't mean. Sometimes, when I am emotional for a serious reason, he fails to take my emotions seriously, and says something to upset me more. " Why do we become emotional when we do? The most common way in which emotions occur is when we sense, rightly or wrongly, that something that seriously affects our welfare, for better or worse, is happening or about to happen.." (Ekman 19.) Although my boyfriend may be somewhat emotionally insensitive, he does apologize afterwards if he hurts my feelings, which means a lot to me.

Compromise is important in relationships also. It can never just be about one person, or it is a one-road relationship that is bound to fail. According to Floyd, it's important to emphasize excitement and positivity, handle conflict constructively, have realistic expectations, and manage dialectical tensions (362-367.) For my boyfriend and I, we try to be spontaneous and do things out of the ordinary on a regular basis; that emphasizes excitement. Just like in Date Night, when Phil and Claire Foster have problems because of having the same every day routine, romantic relationships may have problems when things are the same every single day. When they are chased and almost killed after being mistaken for thieves when they took another couples reservations at a restaurant. After all the excitement of being chased and almost killed, their relationship was much better because they appreciated each other much more after all the excitement. A change in a mundane schedule sometimes can help to get away from relationship

problems. We also try to thank each other for things that we do just to make each other happy, so that both of us know we appreciate what we do for one another; that emphasizes positivity. Handling conflict constructively is the most important, because there is conflict in every relationship that I have seen and if conflict isn't handled constructively, it could obviously lead to an unhealthy relationship. Realistic expectations help to keep order in a relationship. You can't expect a person to completely drop his/her life to be with another person. There has to be balance in the relationship for it to be fair. Managing dialectical tension is dealing with two opposite needs (Floyd 366). Another way to help a relationship is to accept the person for who they are and not to try to change who they are. You should love a person for who he/she is, and if you can't accept that person for who he/she is, you shouldn't be in a relationship with him/her (Sorgen).

In this paper, I explained what makes a relationship successful, and what can be done to make a relationship better. Every couple's relationship is different and there is not one way to go about handling a relationship, or its problems. Make sure you love, respect, and show care for the person you love, and try to understand each other's opinions and beliefs, even if you don't exactly agree with your significant other. Work Cited

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