

News Release

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Valentine's Day is Coming

Tampa, Florida (February, 2011). Poetry, novels, movies, music etc. each send a variety of messages regarding love and relationships. As a result, one often interprets and defines love based on a romantic or idealistic perspective. Do we know what it really takes to have a loving relationship that will last? Don't most people talk about love being the foundation? Let's reframe that a bit and put respect as the foundation. Once respect is present, trust will be built and then both of those lead to love.

It is important to always treat the other with respect. That means no "put downs," no name calling, and no "over talking" the other. It means taking a hard look at what is meaningful and important to the other. So often we impose on the other what we think they should think, how they should behave and what they should consider important. It may take some time but eventually we might get hit "out of the blue" with a high level of dissatisfaction when they finally "let loose" and "put us in our place." Sometimes when that happen, we don't "have a clue" as to what went wrong! The other, however, feels as if they have tried over and over to communicate their dissatisfaction and frustration.

Another part of the problem is known as "filtering." This is when a set of behaviors occurs over and over so that eventually one begins to say things like: "You always..." or "You never..." In fact the frequency may not be all that significant but the particular impact of the words of behaviors has grown in the person's mind so it seems like "always" and "never." For some reason, we often tend to repeat the same statements, problems and behaviors over and over.

What constitutes a healthy relationship?

- **Communication that is respectful and mutual and that considers both individual's desires and needs.**
- **Listening first and talking second. It is often said that is why we have two ears and one mouth.**
- **Learning how to utilize conflict in a positive manner by learning to give and take in an attempt to reach mutual gains.**
- **Being supportive and encouraging.**
- **Not going to bed angry or with unresolved issues.**
- **Accepting and honoring that individual's often have unique interests that they want to do alone and that they sometimes need their own private space often referred to as a "secret garden."**
- **And most important of all, you chose this individual out of all the others on this planet because there was something special. Try to focus on that rather than what limitations of negative behaviors they manifest. In short, don't try to or expect them to change.**

Habits are difficult to break. We often do not understand the impact that our thinking and behaviors have on our relationships. If you need help in learning a better way to get your relationships back on track, help is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Just call your EAP and you will be directed to our experienced team of counselors. It is that simple. We will help you cope, find assistance, and guide you down the path to effectively dealing with whatever might be impacting your life.