

Coaching Points: Shaping Up Your Relationship

Take some time to review your own relationship values. Using the Reflective Writing Exercise* can help you organize your thoughts and feelings. Discuss these issues with your partner and problem solve ways that the two of you can be more mutually supportive.



*For the Reflective Writing Exercise, go to:
www.coachforamerica.com

- 1. Everything is not about you.** This is one of the Golden Rules of communication! If you don't learn any of the others, try to master this one! Seeing the world from your partner's perspective is critical to an intimate relationship. Surprisingly, this is not an easy skill for some people. Some men understand an event or situation only as it relates to *them* rather than how it relates to their partner's world or reality. If you are on a mission to fix your partner's problem to feel good about yourself, your personal agenda may be hidden to you, but your partner smells it a mile away! Listening with two ears and asking how you can support your partner is always good form.
- 2. Care about what's best for her.** Trust is built when she can rely on you to support her without your own agenda. When you do this, you find that eventually your partner will feel closer and safer sharing more of herself with you. You can't begin to build trust, however, without interest in knowing your partner and you can't know your partner without talking to her. Genuine communication is critical to keeping the connection between couples alive.
- 3. Be a Team Player.** Get in the game! Nobody likes to feel like they are battling life alone. From the daily affairs of co-parenting, sharing financial duties and talking through problems to the enthusiastic planning of family vacations and romantic getaways, struggling women like to feel like their guy is in the game with them!
- 4. Be a Friend.** Some guys actually treat their friends with more respect than their partners. If you cannot learn to see and respect your partner as a whole human being who has thoughts, feelings, desires, dreams, needs, opinions and rights that are equal to yours, then your relationship is already in a state of atrophy. Be willing to challenge what you believe about wives and husbands and women and men.

- 5. Have her Back.** If you are dropping the ball on the little things, chances are your partner may question your capacity to be there if or when things get really rough. Does your partner feel like you've got her covered? Do you have her back?
- 6. Be Teachable.** Every woman agrees that a man who wants to learn and grow is attractive! One of the best ways to keep a relationship energized is by continuing to explore how to do things better. Being stubborn and defensive may win you the battle but will surely lose you the war. Teach ability and flexibility go hand in hand. Grow and flow!
- 7. Seek Truth.** Romantic relationships often reveal the deepest parts of our souls. When exposed, who is the man your partner sees? What are your driving principles? Where do you find purpose and cause? Nurturing your spirituality is the way to support and drive everything you do! When your partner needs to hold onto you, you better be holding onto something yourself. Being a seeker of truth will help ground you in principles with values and virtues that guide all of your behaviors and relationships and spark passion between you and your partner giving life new energy and meaning.
- 8. Do the Right Thing.** We really don't want bad boys, contrary to Hollywood's idea portrayed by tormented, dark and troubled guys who treat us badly while we beg for more and pass over the kind and sensitive good guys. Most women pay attention to the choices and decisions their men make. Those who choose to stay with men of weak character may have their own challenges to overcome. Either way, you doing the right thing ALWAYS makes doing the right thing easier for your partner!
- 9. Be Strong AND Sensitive.** Most men know by now that these qualities are not mutually exclusive. Even more so they are becoming harder to separate. One must be strong to maintain an active sensitivity to others and one who has an active sensitivity must be strong to field the emotional fly balls that life sends on a regular basis. Do you have the **RANGE** in your emotional skills to be a healthy inter-dependent partner? If not, you can work to deepen your insight, strengthen your emotional capacity and develop the skills you need for a robust intimacy.
- 10. Make a commitment to Shaping Up Your Relationship and tell your partner you're doing it!**

