Ingredients to a Healthy Relationship

By Denise Walker, M.A.

Relationships can be described as uncharted territory of two willing individuals coming together to create a new bond and in the beginning it is exciting. The possibilities of building a solid foundation are unknown but the effort is worth it. What happens after the excitement wears off? The foundation of any relationship is to ensure that once the puppy love phase has worn off, you and your partner can continue to flourish. Some key elements to the foundation of the relationship are appreciation and respect. Notice the small things that your partner does to ensure that you all are on a path of progression. Discover the common core values that each of you have. Learn and accept what is important to your partner. Exploring individual interest together can create an atmosphere to establish common interest.

Relationships are ever evolving. Change is inevitable and having an open mind to embrace the changes that will occur is one step toward developing a healthy relationship. Recognizing these changes and how they are affecting your relationship is imperative. Take the time to periodically check in on how you have noticed yourself and your partner change and how this could possibly affect your relationship. Acknowledging rather than ignoring will reduce the chances of being in an unhappy relationship.

We all know that conflict arises within any type of relationship when you have two differing personalities coming together, but the true question is how to work through the conflict? Knowing the right timing, being clear in your message to your partner, and taking turns in your discussion are some guidelines that can help you with conflict. Attacking an issue head on may not be the right time to discuss an issue. It may be best to revisit the situation at a later date. Secondly, be clear in your message. Aligning your verbal and nonverbal messages is important in helping your partner truly understand the issue that you may be having. Lastly, talk about one issue at a time and take turns in your discussion. Respect one another enough to allow the one who is expressing themselves to fully voice their concerns. This creates an atmosphere of emotional support and comfort.

This year the Counseling Center will be presenting its 4th Annual “Relationship Roadmap: Stop and Ask Directions” on February 11, 2015 in the RSC Club from 4-6pm. This program is targeted for those who are in relationships and want to enhance their bond, single individuals who may be seeking guidance on relationships, or anyone who has experienced a recent break up and wants to learn how to build and maintain a healthy relationship. Come out and see staff and student couples compete in the Newlywed style game and listen to a panel of relationship experts discuss building healthy relationships. The panel will be answering audience generated questions so feel free to beginning writing down some questions that you may want to pose to the panel.