



Five Steps to take **TODAY** toward Your Best Relationship



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I am about to share with you 5 steps that you can take toward creating your best relationship.

It is my hope that you will take these steps immediately and apply them to your relationship so that you can experience greater happiness, satisfaction and understanding in your relationship.

Relationships are important, much more important than we are led to believe. We all know this at an innate level, after all, love has been the obsessions of artists, musicians and poets since time began, but we are taught from an early age to prioritize other things in life first: education, careers, financial success, to name a few. We are not given a guidebook on relationships nor do we learn about relationships as we may learn algebra or geography. Instead, we learn about relationships implicitly through family, media and society.

What we do learn about relationships is not always encouraging.

With a divorce rate in the United States hovering around 50% and our own role models not always being ideal, it is no surprise that more and more people are skeptical about committed relationships. It is also no surprise that so many relationships feel doomed, no matter how hard we try to make things right.

Most of us are not given the tools to develop the kinds of relationships that we need. Instead, we often feel set up for failure, attracting the wrong kinds of people, getting into relationships in which we do not feel seen or understood, and finding ourselves hurt. As a result of destructive patterns that emerge between partners, with seemingly no way out, too many relationships end without even getting a chance.

Too many people choose to be alone instead of in a relationship.

It hurts too much to try, the divorce rate is too high, marriage is a crock. Young people tell me this all the time; they never see themselves wanting to commit to a partner. They see no healthy relationships around them and all they know about relationships is that they cause pain.

It doesn't have to be this way.

We all deserve, are entitled to and need a healthy and happy relationship.

People don't understand the emerging truth that a safe and healthy relationship is crucial to a happy and healthy life.

This emerging truth is considered the "New Science of Love," which demonstrates that we need safe and secure relationships in our lives to thrive as much as we need food and oxygen. And with this understanding of the New Science of Love, psychologists and neuroscientists are beginning to finally understand how to make it work for everyone!

With the understanding of the New Science of Love and prioritizing your relationship, **it is possible to create your best relationship.**

It is possible for you to wake up every morning with the person of your dreams.

And it goes beyond that - it is possible to understand your partner and feel understood, to feel endless support and safe in the world, to feel tremendous gratitude every day for your happy existence because of this person in your life and the life you create together.

Regardless of whether you have had one yet, a safe and secure connection to someone is your birthright.

This relationship will create health and happiness for you and for your family. And, it may sound far-fetched, but a happy and securely connected family leads to a more peaceful world.

You owe it to yourself to have your best relationship.

So...let's dig in, and look at 5 steps toward getting to your best relationship:

1. Understand the new science of love
2. Tell them, and tell them again!
3. Nurture your greatest asset with time and presence
4. Honor your greatest asset with rituals and celebrate it
5. Take risks and get close

Step 1 Understand the new science of love

What is this new science of love? It sounds so intriguing and mysterious, but you were born with it in your bones. The New Science of Love, developed over the last few decades with careful research implementing the latest technology, tells us something we all know on one level or another: We are born to connect. We are social animals and we need each other.

We know this on an innate and deeply emotional level, but maybe not consciously or intellectually. Like many of us, perhaps you were brought up with values of independence and autonomy. Perhaps you think you need to only rely on yourself, and that relying on others is a weakness.

The New Science of Love teaches us that everything we thought about the glories of independence was off, and we are growing more and more stressed, depressed and physically sick because of these beliefs and our tendency to isolate ourselves from each other and our own needs.

The New Science of Love also points to the facts that we are stronger, more secure and more successfully independent only when effectively dependent on another. The New Science of Love urges us to realize this: we no longer need to pretend

that we are okay or need to be okay with being completely alone.

Clients of mine who have struggled in relationships tell me, “we are born alone, we die alone: Life is ultimately an isolated experience.” This couldn’t be further from the truth: We are born helpless and dependent, and need care and comfort to grow healthily as much as we need food. We take these needs with us to our dying days.

Too many of us deny this human need to have a secure relationship with another, and in so doing, set ourselves up for failure in our relationships.

We start to freak out when we find ourselves relying on our partners to meet our emotional needs. We get scared of relying too heavily on someone else without understanding that it is actually impossible to have a healthy relationship without having our partner meet such needs!

Perhaps you can identify? As soon as things start looking good in your relationship, do you find a way to mess it up? Do you run the other way? Or have you have had partners who have bolted as soon as you start getting close? It is all too common because everything we learn about relationships is often opposite to the truth that the New Science of Love teaches us, namely that we need each other.

Sue Johnson, an internationally esteemed psychologist and pioneer in couples therapy, puts it best: “There is no such thing as co-dependency, there is only effective and ineffective dependency.” Ultimately, we depend on each other, whether we like it or not.

So, with all of this being said, it is crucial to understand at least the basics about The New Science of Love and accept the fact that you are a healthier and stronger individual when you can rely on a safe and secure relationship in your life. I know you probably know this in your heart, but some part of you might have tried to deny this to yourself throughout your life. Once we understand this and accept this truth, we are given permission to prioritize and nurture our relationships, and understand and accept our own needs so that we can get them met.

ACTION STEP Go tell someone - your partner if you have one - a little bit about The New Science of Love.

This will help solidify the knowledge about it for you and will also educate someone else, particularly someone who needs to know if they are in a relationship with you!

With this understanding of The New Science of Love, let's look at a few more steps to up-level your relationship so that you make it your best.

Step 2 Tell them, and tell them again!

Many couples I see come into my office and tell me how much they appreciate x y or z that their partner did the previous week and how much it meant to them. The look on their partner's face is usually priceless - they are simply stunned. I literally see this several times weekly. They had no idea that anything they did meant an iota to their partner.

BONUS TIP: Our partners cannot read our minds.

We all can fall into the trap of thinking that our partner is a mind reader, but unless they really do have certain telepathic powers, they cannot read minds, even ours! Just because we think something or see something a certain way, or feel something - good or bad - our partner doesn't know unless we tell them.

If you are feeling or thinking a certain way about something, particularly about your partner, recognize that he or she will usually not know unless you tell them. Certainly your partner may realize if you are in a certain kind of mood - grumpy, happy, sad, or whatever - but most often, unless there is a clear reason why (and even sometimes when there is a clear reason why), he or she will not know what it's about. Tell them, and if it's something positive because of something they did, tell them again!

It is so important to let your partner know how much you appreciate him or her. Who doesn't like feeling appreciated? We all need to hear this and we can never get sick of hearing how much we mean to our partner.

People tell me, “I do so much to show him I appreciate him. I cook dinner, I do the laundry,” and ramble on. That’s great, but *tell him*. He needs to hear it too, just like you do.

BONUS TIP: You will start to hear more from your partner about how much he appreciates you as well. Pretty soon, you will start to hear how grateful he is that you cook dinner, do the laundry, and that you just are who you are. Who doesn’t want that?

ACTION STEP: Think of 5 things you appreciate about your partner and go tell them at least 1 of those things now.

If you are away from them and at a desk, send them a quick email letting them know that you are thinking of them and that you appreciated xyz. To make this exercise even more powerful, implement it daily.

Step 3 Nurture your greatest asset with time and presence

Spend time together. I know you are busy, but your relationship is so important. Even just a few minutes a day of guaranteed quality time is better than nothing.

I see workaholics and busy couples with young children who have been so busy taking care of others and their financial lives that they let their relationship go down the tubes, without even realizing it. I applaud them for seeking help when they come to therapy, seeking a new path of restoration and a new direction, before it’s too late. Sadly, though, many couples put therapy off after years of struggle before seeking help.

Many busy couples make time to see me in therapy for an hour every week. They do amazing work together: They take risks with each other, they show sides of themselves they’ve never shown or even experienced before, and they reach each other in new ways. The most successful couples in therapy never miss a session, they commit to themselves and to me and they show up like clockwork every week.

These couples experience success and have a tremendous experience with the process, coming out of it connected to each other like never before. But what happens when we stop meeting? When during their busy weeks do they actually see each other? Between work, family obligations, other commitments and everything else, couples often lose each other, which is one part of the problem that brought them to counseling in the first place.

Don't let this happen in your relationship!

I make sure that with every couple who leaves my office after the process of therapy, they commit to each other *at least* what they committed to me and the process of therapy, if not much more so. For therapy, they set a recurring time in their calendar on a weekly basis, and showed up present and ready to engage. Similarly, with each other, I insist that they take *at least* an hour a week to just be together, without other distractions.

ACTION STEP: Do a quick assessment of your own relationship and time spent in it: Do you need more quality time together?

If yes, you need to get your partner on board with this. Share this guide if it will help, and figure out a way of nurturing your greatest asset with time and presence.

Some ideas other couples have implemented include taking regular walks together, going to dinner on a consistent basis, sharing coffee at the same time – really anything – as long as they are focusing on their relationship and checking in with each other about how they are doing. What makes the most sense for you?

Step 4 Honor Your Greatest Asset with Rituals and Celebrate It!

In step 3, we discussed quality time and how to create it with each other. I also am suggesting that you automate rituals in your relationships that are easily implemented and don't take up any energy.

You probably already have some rituals that you may not even be aware of, e.g., coffee in the morning together, how you greet each other when you see each other after a day of work, or reading in bed together before you go to sleep.

If you don't have any of such rituals that you can be sure will happen on at the very least a weekly and preferably daily schedule, it is important that you create some. Perhaps a daily morning shower together - just think of how much water you will save!

It is also important to honor special events in your relationship. Wedding anniversary celebrations are more common, but what about other important dates in your relationship? Do you remember the day that you first met or became a "couple?" When was your first date? What other special things unique to your relationship that you can celebrate?

Celebrate, and celebrate often. We only live once.

ACTION STEP: Think of the rituals that you have in your relationship, and consider adding more. Also, just for fun, figure out a way to celebrate your relationship, or something about it, in a new way this month.

Step 5 Take risks and get close

This is perhaps the most important step toward creating your best relationship, and it is definitely the most difficult.

As we briefly discussed in the first step, many people have fears about really embracing their relationship. They fear they will become too attached or too dependent on their partners, and don't allow themselves to get too close or too excited about having something so great.

Maybe you have held back in relationships because you know that people leave and people die, it's a fact of life. Perhaps if people have left or died on you, you are more hesitant to get close to someone else. The good news is that studies have demonstrated that the more connected and secure a relationship is between partners, the better the widowed person does following the loss.

So get close: it really is better to have loved and lost.

Let your partner in, express how you are feeling, and don't be afraid of asking for what you need. As we discussed earlier, your partner is not a mind reader. Furthermore, taking these steps does not guarantee that you will get what you need, which is one of the reasons why doing this can be so scary. But, your needs are important to fulfill in order to create your best relationship.

If you are a survivor of trauma or have had significant people in your life abandon you, even if in subtle ways, it is likely to be very difficult for you to get close to someone. All of this still applies to you though - just take it slow. Recognize that trust is established over time. Go at your own pace, be open with your partner about this, and let them in to the extent that you feel comfortable.

I know this is a lot easier said than done, but try to take small risks if you can, while being gentle with yourself. Individual and couples therapy can really help with this if you are struggling or if you feel stuck, but you know somewhere in your heart that you deserve more and are ready to claim that.

Please trust me: if you are not experiencing your best relationship now, you deserve more.

So, there you have it, the 5 steps toward creating your best relationship. Of course it takes two to tango and you need to get your partner on board with this, so please forward this or encourage your partner to sign up for this e-book.

If you did not take any of the action steps outlined above, please go back and re-read the report and take the action steps. Your best relationship does take effort to create, and also requires risks and taking a step or two (or ten) out of your comfort zone. It is worth it.

If you are hesitant to go it alone or would like assistance with creating your best relationship, please check out our programs offered at www.mybestrelationship.com for personalized counseling and guidance tailored to your specific situation. If we do not have availability or for whatever reason it does not work out for you to work with us, we will be happy to refer you to excellent, qualified therapists in your area who also understand The New Science of Love.

BONUS TIP – THE 6TH STEP!

Another tremendous resource for you and your partner to read together is the book written by Dr. Susan Johnson, *Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*. Through her tireless work and research over the last few decades, Sue Johnson has transformed the way love has been looked at and has developed a proven method to get couples on track and into their best relationships. This book will introduce you to her work. It has helped many couples understand and speed up the process of creating their best relationships, both in conjunction with counseling and on its own.

At www.mybestrelationship.com, we follow the tried and true process created by Sue Johnson to revitalize relationships, known as Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT). Through countless research studies, EFT has demonstrated a track record of helping 90% of couples improve their relationships.

We would be excited to hear from you about your thoughts and comments about this e-book. We would also love to hear from you if you have interest in working with us directly to create your best relationship.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us: info@mybestrelationship.com

FINAL ACTION STEP: Please spread the love! If you feel compelled to do so, please share this e-book with anyone who you think will benefit from it.

Cheers to your best relationship!



About the author:

Jenev Caddell, PsyD, is the founder of www.mybestrelationship.com and My Best Relationship Psychological Services, PLLC. She is a psychologist and certified Emotionally Focused Therapist whose mission it is to spread the word that your best relationship is crucial to your health and happiness, and that it is also within your reach. Dr. Caddell works with couples committed to each other who struggle with their relationships and would like to communicate better, understand each other, and be happy together again.