

## The Better Relationship Series

Over the next couple of months we will be releasing three newsletters dedicated to helping you improve your relationships.

Unfortunately relationships are one of the hardest human activities to navigate successfully. We can connect with other people at first, but things can change. Over time you may find people can't seem to understand your viewpoint on important issues, or values may seem different. It hurts when you're let down or you can't seem to find a way to resolve problems. Relationships with others are complex and often challenging, but they are also rewarding, meaning we WANT to make them work. This is especially true for the relationship we hold with our significant other.

There are often times in your marriage or significant relationship where you wonder where the love has gone. Somehow, in the hum-drum of our regular lives and routines, the passion we once felt for our partner disappears and we drift apart, leaving us feeling alone and perhaps worried or confused. We question whether we can ever get the love back and feel truly connected again.

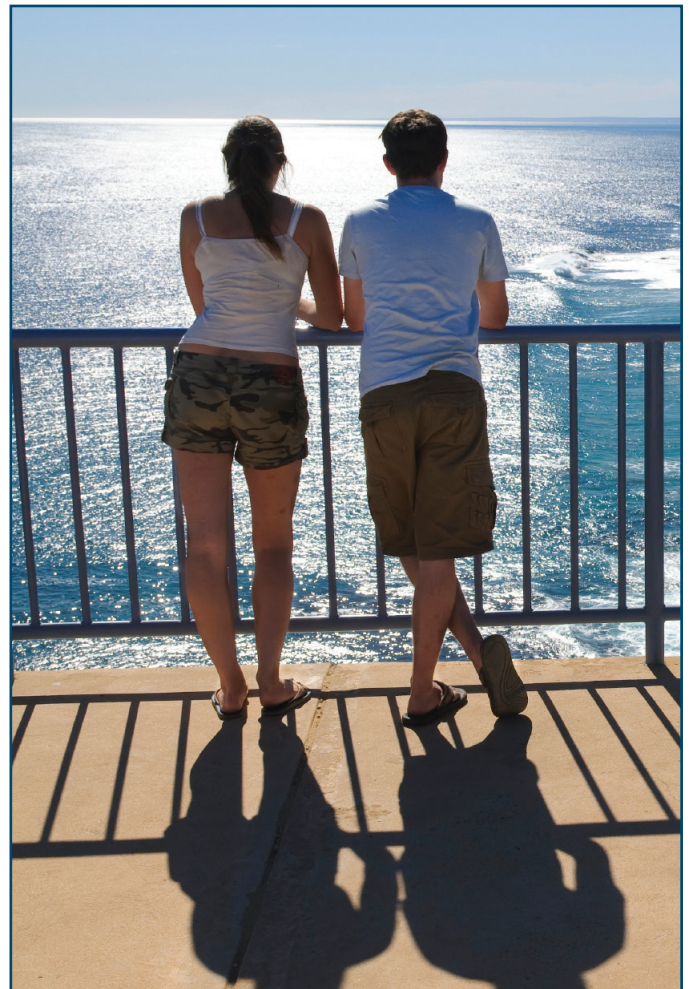
The good news is that love can be rekindled. Often to a couple's surprise, their love may grow deeper than it has ever been.

### So just how do you make a relationship work really well?

If you're a bit tired of the gushy tips and want to scream "*Tell me something I don't know!*" or "*so just HOW do I do that?!!*" then stay tuned.

Some of us may find that special person, but be warned, even if you have found them now, the fairy tale will need work. Satisfying, deep relationships don't magically continue without conscious attention and activities that keep them on track.

In the last decade or so we've learnt more about what makes intimate relationships work but it's still not common knowledge. It can be frustrating when you see advice like 'communicate' or 'make time for each other'. You've probably tried that, right? It's often not that easy. Relationships are complex because people are complex. So after learning new information we have to commit (sorry, no getting off the hook with this one) to making and continuing positive changes in our relationships.



The best place to start is to introduce you to Dr John Gottman, who is arguably the world's leading expert on couple relationships. Dr Gottman has spent several decades scientifically studying couples to find out what makes couple relationships successful and what causes them to fail.

According to Dr Gottman a good relationship requires you to build a 'Sound Relationship House'. The Sound Relationship House has several floors which help support the floors above. The first floor relates to Building Love Maps. Simply put, knowing the small stuff about your partner's life and making room for that in your head, helps you build love and intimacy. Just like you, your partner's views and preferences may change over time, so keeping love maps up-to-date is necessary. Having deep, current knowledge of each other is the goal of love maps. To learn more about building love maps visit this website. <https://www.gottman.com/blog/build-love-maps/>



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Getting to know your partner well, even if you've been together a long time, is a positive process. We sometimes have our own ideas about our partner that don't really ring true, so taking the time to 'check in' with love maps is a practical way to start a new conversation and learn more. It's not a contest on who knows who better, so use love maps curiously and with a smile. 😊

See you next time for more on the Better Relationship Series.

Here are some questions you may like to ask to get to know each other better.

Don't be afraid to try your own as well.

- Name my two closest friends.
- What was I wearing when we first met?
- Name one of my hobbies.
- What stresses am I facing right now?
- What is my fondest unrealised dream?
- What is one of my greatest fears or disaster scenarios?
- What is my favourite way to spend an evening?
- What is one of my favourite ways to be soothed?
- What is my favourite getaway place?
- What are some of the important events coming up in my life? How do I feel about them?
- What are some of my favourite ways to work out?
- Name one of my major rivals or "enemies."
- What would I consider my ideal job?
- What medical problems do I worry about?
- What was my most embarrassing moment?
- Name one of my favourite novels/movies.
- What is my favourite restaurant?

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