

JOHN WARD

# SOCIAL

*Intelligence*



6 Books in 1- Habits of Highly Effective people, Improve People Skills, Declutter Your Mind, Home Minimalist, Relationship Anxiety, and Relationships Communication Secrets

# SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

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IMPROVE PEOPLE SKILLS, DECLUTTER YOUR MIND,  
HOME MINIMALIST, RELATIONSHIP ANXIETY, AND  
RELATIONSHIPS COMMUNICATION SECRETS

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# THE ART OF SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

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OBSERVE THE HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE AND  
IMPROVE YOUR MINDSET

## **John Ward**

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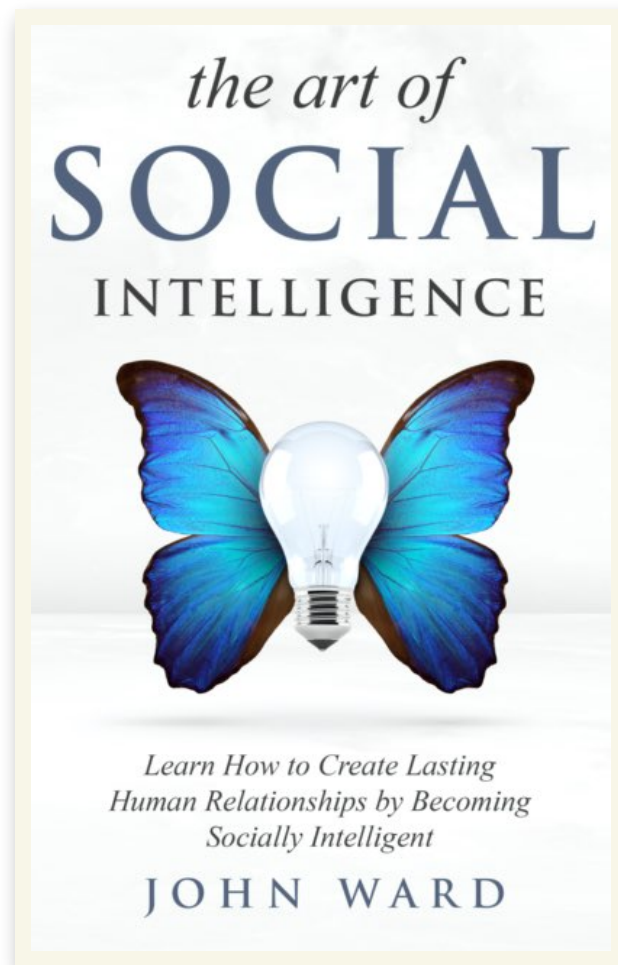
*“The way to do is to be.”*

*Lao Tzu*



THANK YOU!

As a way of saying thank you, I would like to offer you a copy of the mini-book that I have written. This mini-book includes: how to save \time, learn faster, remember more, become more charismatic, learn how to live with less, and conquer mindfulness. I will also be giving away free copies of my books, so if you are interested [CLICK HERE](#)





## INTRODUCTION

Fostering professional and personal relationships can be quite a challenge to some. However, there are people who seem to just breeze right through the process. The task of socializing and connecting seem so effortless to them. Have you ever wondered what makes these people different?

The answer to that is social intelligence. The reason why it seems so natural for these people to start great conversations and create a good social network is that they have high social literacy. Social intelligence gives individuals the ability to approach social situations better by equipping them with the ability to assess all the elements in these interactions.

These individuals are able to sense the emotional state of their peers. They are able to respond to social dynamics appropriately. They have a good sense of self-awareness and are self-assured even in the most hectic situations. They are also able to express their ideas more effectively and their peers respond more positively to them.

Acquiring social literacy gives individuals an advantage both in their professional and personal lives. With it, the difficulty in understanding your boss, your partner, your friends, and your family becomes much less. You will be able to have a better perspective of yourself, your relationships, and your engagements with others by simply using the devices you will learn as you develop your social intelligence. Having the ability to effectively address your social relations will eventually give you a happier, more rewarding, and more fulfilling life.

The good news is that social intelligence can be developed. It is not set and it can be worked on as long as you have the right mindset for it. Being socially literate is not something you are simply born with. You can develop the right set of skills to harness it and that is what this book aims to provide you with.

However, developing social intelligence is not a replacement for a person's sense of identity. Before we delve into the intricacies of interacting with others, we will first go through the process of honest self-discovery and forming your own personal brand.

This is the prerequisite to building relationships with others. You must first have a sense of self that is authentic and true. This will enable you to keep your interactions genuine and sincere. It will also make you aware of the bad habits and damaging mistakes you make in the way you socialize with others.

Authenticity plays a big role in being able to develop your self-awareness and self-esteem. Both of which are important aspects of honing your social intelligence. The journey to getting to know yourself will require you to be more honest in the way you view yourself and the things that you do.

It is impossible to understand yourself if you are only basing your self-worth and identity on the approval of others. It will be very important for you to commit to honest self-reflection as you follow the book. It is the only way for you to understand how all the teachings can be applied in your life. The most important thing is that you use these lessons to live your true sense of self.

Social literacy cannot be instantly acquired. You do not just define it and you instantly have the tools and skills you need. It takes a lot of practice and commitment. That commitment can only come if you participate in a way that is authentic to you.

This book will not focus solely on the philosophical path toward social intelligence. Instead, it will include actual instructions and practical steps you can take. We will delve into the actions you have to make to really develop your skills and widen your perspective on things.

One of the things you will learn in this book is the difference between effective communication and communication that is only meant to please



your peers. If you approach every single conversation with the mindset that you are going to get the other person's approval, you will likely end up disappointing yourself.

Although you can get people to like you with it, there is a more important aspect you can learn as you polish up on your social intelligence and that is setting appropriate goals within your interactions. This can be a variety of things like planning a project, understanding a concept you are working on, or maybe even just having a great time enjoying someone else's company. Having a good understanding of your social goals can make you more effective and less anxious when it comes to social interactions.

The best tool you can have in any social setting is to be able to communicate effectively. Effective communication includes verbal and nonverbal language. Each will be discussed in the book thoroughly. Improving your communication skills will be an important part of social literacy.

One way you can look at social literacy is in the form of intuition. After you practice all the steps and you commit to them, you eventually develop an instinct for it. Soon enough, you will look at all social interactions in a better light and respond to them more intuitively because you have acquired a set of habits that are proven to be effective. Eventually, you will also see a difference in the way people respond to your communication.

The greatest difficulty in social interactions is that people are raised differently and you have to have a different approach from person to person. To do that, you must have a way to separate yourself from the differences you have with other people.

That can be daunting, of course. If you look at it as a whole bunch of people that you have to study and figure out before you even approach them, you will be overwhelmed. That is why we will keep going back to your own identity. The best way for you to understand others is knowing

that you yourself have your own values, beliefs, culture, and needs. And once you shift your attention to other people, you will find out how similar and different people can be from each other.

Because of our differences in culture and beliefs, conflicts become inevitable. That is why conflict resolution is one of the important things that will be tackled in this book. It is easy to damage relationships when conflict resolutions do not work out. But resolving conflicts is not an impossible task and as long as it is approached with respect and effective communication is applied, it can be a rewarding process that can further strengthen relationships. That is where social literacy does its work best.

Emotional intelligence also plays a crucial part in gaining social literacy. Although they have their similarities, emotional intelligence confronts ideas, and concepts surrounding the emotions of a person and social intelligence is more about understanding individuals and how they interact with others.

The intricacies of emotional intelligence and how to improve on it will be discussed because it is essential for a person to see and understand how emotions can affect the way people interact in social settings and how feelings can be better managed so that individuals can navigate through socializing without being taken over by strong emotions.

Emotional intelligence can also further a person's viewpoint on the relationships he or she engages in. By being more in touch with his own emotions and those of others, a person gets to appreciate other people more for who they really are outside of the situations and processes they are in.

Our lives go through a lot of ups and downs and these struggles can affect our ability to be true to ourselves and to be available for new learnings and self-enrichment. Lessons on how we can be able to regain control of our lives and look forward to a more fulfilling future will also be a part of this learning journey towards social intelligence.

When we are able to manage our lives better and let go of the fears and self-doubt that mistakes from the past come with, we are enabled to further our learnings and develop a stronger sense of independence.

Throughout my career as a psychology professor and as a motivational speaker, I have been approached numerous times by people who are having trouble with self-defeating habits when it comes to understanding themselves, understanding other people, and being able to create meaningful connections.

When I was younger, I myself have struggled with my communication skills. As I grew up and learned more about people, what motivates them, and what holds them back from the things they aspire to be, I found how improving one's social intelligence can help people get ahead in life, form worthwhile relationships, and allow themselves to be free from negativity and self-doubt.

Social intelligence can be challenging to master but if you approach it proactively, you can reap the benefits more quickly. With this book, you will be able to get rid of your fears and anxieties when it comes to socializing and working with other people. This book aims to help you understand yourself and others more so that you can identify what skills and devices you can tap into for a more fulfilling and effective social life.



## UNDERSTAND YOURSELF

*I* imagine yourself in a hallway and then a classmate from 10 years ago suddenly pops up out of nowhere. After you realize who this person was, you start to associate his current self to your previous encounters with him. He appears to be your classmate who stuttered when he spoke. You prep yourself with the same methods you chose when you interacted with him in the past.

Once you started a conversation with him, you expected him to have the same speech problems he had when you were younger. You tell yourself to be kind and to try your best not to look bothered once he starts to stutter.

As he opens his mouth, he speaks to you in perfect speech without stumbling. You find out from him that he was able to overcome his stutter and is no longer struggling with his speech.

Your brain then goes into refocus as you discover that what you know about this other person in the past is no longer true in the present.

All the prepping you did as you anticipated your exchange with him was based on a preset that was formed from the past and was revisited by your brain. The initial concepts you had were processed within your own mind and held no proof of what was to come but you still decided to curate your actions based on them.

Three aspects of a person's being can affect how he manages relationships and interactions with his peers. These are social, mental, and physical aspects.

Let's break down the encounter with the classmate. The social aspect was the acknowledgment that your classmate is a person who is separate from you and that he is capable of interacting with you. He is not an inanimate object that won't be bothered if you just walk past them.

Once you recognize this person, several thoughts ran through your head and everything about that person comes from a collection of memories of

previously having his presence around. You were reminded of his voice, his gestures, and his looks. These are all social elements and you attach these references to that person's being.

Then, there's the mental aspect. When you started making conclusions and decisions about this person, it was your mind that came up with those things. Your brain has processed the information that was gathered from the past and it led you to decide on the actions you will be taking in the current situation.

You could not have possibly telepathically communicated with your former classmate –if you did, you would have found out that he no longer stutters when he speaks. All the ideas that influenced your actions were all in your mind.

The third is the physical aspect. The common reflex action when you see a person you know is raising your eyebrows. The next thing may be waving at them or smiling at them. These are physical responses your body makes when placed in such situations.

These three aspects work together and their effects may not always seem obvious to you but they matter. Before you even get to the other person, your mind and body have already reacted. How a person acts in social interactions comes from internal thoughts and preexisting notions.

To be able to understand your social environment, it is most important to understand yourself first. This process is called introspection. Introspection works by looking within you and assessing your own thoughts and emotions. The process allows you to gain knowledge about yourself and this knowledge can only come from self-reflection and self-analysis. Introspection can help make the connections between experiences and how people respond to your behavior.

To do this, there are some questions you can ask yourself.

## NUMBER 1: HOW DO YOU REACT WHEN A STRANGER GREETES YOU?

Say, a random person comes up to you at the grocery and says, “Hi”. Do you smile? Do you greet them back?

Seeing how you respond to these kinds of situations can help you assess the first impression you give to other people. This stranger will receive the first information he can get about you. What will be the first adjective he gives you? Are you a snub? Are you polite? Are you awkward?

## NUMBER 2: HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO SOCIAL STIMULI?

The stranger in the grocery asks you if you are vegan. What thoughts run through your head as this person talks to you? Are you setting expectations? Do you feel anxious? Are there physical manifestations of your reactions like stuttering or maybe a change in the tone and pitch of your voice? What reflexes do you start to show?

During the encounters you've had in the past, do you find that certain people, topics, or environments make you respond a certain way? Say your pet peeve would be high pitched voices, does your aversion to that affect the way you socialize with people?

All of these questions in number two are triggered by outside influence or stimuli. These can only be determined by the reactions you've shown towards previous social experiences.



### NUMBER 3: IS YOUR SOCIAL BEHAVIOR REPULSIVE?

Now, this is when you start to look outside of yourself more. After participating in social interactions, how have people reacted to you? Were there instances when you negatively affected a person because of the way you handled your interactions with them?

There are certain cues you get when another person starts getting uncomfortable with you. One would be a negative change in their behavior or speech. Another one is when you do not get a second chance with this person anymore. He starts avoiding you and you do not ever continue on any form of relationship with him.

There are a lot more ways to tell if someone has responded negatively to socially interacting with you. See if you can figure out what actions came from you that led to this. Maybe you were too excited about something and you started sounding preachy when you spoke? Maybe you were just too happy and you didn't realize you were already talking over another person?

Try to look at the things you do that make you repulsive to other people. You may have been hurtful or obnoxious in the past and you just weren't aware of it.

#### NUMBER 4: DO YOU HAVE ANY BAD EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST WHEN IT COMES TO SOCIALIZING?

If you do, what happened during these encounters? Where in those particular instances did you start feeling it would turn bad? Are there words or actions that you would want to take back?

For example, it was a terrible argument with a friend. You were talking about who the stronger superhero is. It's Batman versus Superman. You were on Batman's side and your friend just couldn't agree with you. He suddenly starts yelling at you and then he walks out on you.

After having a second look at this situation, you remember that you were the first one who started raising your voice. Apparently, you were stressed out about other things that day and it made you a little too passionate about Batman in this situation.

Are you sorry for the way you handled this? Would you have done it differently?

How about if it was the other way around and you were in the shoes of your friend instead? You now realize that you were shocked that your friend had raised his voice so you started shouting in retaliation.

When you look back on this, would you have done the same thing? Do you still feel like your reaction was the right response?

NUMBER 5: WAS THERE EVER A TIME WHEN YOU FELT HAPPY AND CONFIDENT WITH THE OUTCOME OF A SOCIAL SITUATION?

Do you have favorite memories of conversations or moments spent with another person? Go back to those times. What made you happy during these encounters? Was it the other person's or your participation that made you enjoy this particular instance?

If it was your own actions that made you fulfilled, what actions or words do you think made the difference? Are you still applying those things today and are they still effective?

If it was the other person who made you feel this way, what was he like? Are any of his or her actions something you can emulate?

Answering these and other questions will help you identify your social strengths and weaknesses. Take apart the previous interactions you've had and try to break down these situations guided by the concepts introduced within this chapter.

If you are not able to answer these questions by yourself, it can help to find a person you trust who can be honest and objective with you.

Once you've chosen a person who can discuss these things with you, remind yourself to always look at the goals of this process so that you can be more receptive even when you hear difficult things about yourself. Always, always look at this as a task you are doing to allow yourself to improve socially and do better in the future.

Another good thing to do is to list down your answers to these questions. It can be very challenging to have a full understanding of one's self. It is a long process and it can be easy to get lost in all the new things you may not have been previously aware of.

This is the time to take a look at the good, the bad, and the ugly in you. Your pride may be the most sensitive issue in this process. It will be a very humbling experience so start telling yourself that everything will be okay. Do not focus on the pain this might cause your ego; focus on the benefits of having better social outcomes in the future instead.

Raising your social IQ will require you to see how you stack up against everybody else. The most effective way of approaching this is to have a good sense of self-awareness.

Please do not confuse this with being self-conscious, though. Being self-aware means you can identify your strengths and weaknesses without other people having to call you out on them. Being self-conscious on the other hand is when you are constantly being too critical of yourself and you end up letting it take over your process.

Self-awareness should lead to the discovery and better management of your strengths and weaknesses. It should not take you to the path of self-destruction. Being aware of your strengths will not only give you confidence. It will also allow you to offer your capabilities to others. Having an understanding of your weaknesses is beneficial to help you avoid making the same mistakes you've made before.

The biggest mistake you will ever make if you're just starting to learn about social intelligence is prioritizing other people's issues. Remember, if there's one thing you are sure to have control over, it is yourself. Even if you have difficult habits to break, you will still find it easier to manage your own nasty habits than the habits of those other than you.

The bottom line is: it all starts with you.



## SOCIAL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Once you get a detailed view of your social tendencies, it's time for you to learn how to plot out your social assets and liabilities. Now that you have a better look at how social exchanges work, you must now know how these interactions tend to lead to more events as well.

For example, you are at a party and you start telling everyone about your break up with your significant other. Many of these people will feel sorry for you and will respond kindly with supportive words and gestures.

Some of them may also have had individual issues that they were dealing with at the time you were announcing your epic breakup to everyone. These people would rather not focus on your romantic issues simply because they don't have the energy for it and have no interest whatsoever in this personal matter you are talking about. These people are potential friends, business partners, or clients.

Since you have shared this information with them, most of them have started avoiding you in fear of not having the right words to say to you. To them, you are now "The Breakup Guy".

This doesn't sound like such a bad thing but is that what you really want to be labeled as?

Over the next few days, weeks, months, or maybe even years, you have completely moved on from this but the other people have already marked you as this person who had nothing else to talk about but his failed relationship. Some of these people may only have this as a reference for you in their head if no other more significant conversations between you and them occurred after.

At that party, one person there could have become your friend. You both love this Mexican restaurant down the road and you always ordered the same chicken quesadilla from their menu. Unfortunately, when this person sat beside you, you asked her why women just can't understand you and

they all end up leaving you. It didn't have to be in the messy, dramatic manner you see actors do in movies.

You could have said this however way you wanted. The point is, you had that moment wherein you could have started a friendship with someone. But instead of that, this person ended up too alienated by a strong sentiment you have that she had zero background with.

And nope, giving her a detailed background is not enough to lure her into your breakup story. In fact, it might even drive her further away from you. This person was not a part of the romantic relationship you had with your previous significant other. There is no way for her to participate appropriately in this narrative you are sharing with her. Nowhere in this situation will she be able to find something to share with you.

Before you start a conversation, think about what you and the other person will gain for it. It can be humor, wisdom, or support. Whatever it is, conversations are supposed to be a two-way street so you have to consider what both parties will be taking away from this encounter.

Think clearly about the consequences and what value it will have to the person you are sharing this moment with. Time and energy are spent whenever you are engaging in social interaction. If you make it worthwhile for both you and the other party, everybody wins and people will be more drawn to you.

Aside from oversharing, another way of creating social liabilities is not being careful about sensitive topics. Some information can lead to people being hurt and companies being negatively affected. Again, it is better to assess what value the information you transfer will have to the other person. Is it worth the responsibilities afterward?

Your boss will not be happy if he finds out you spilled vital information about your company to others. Your spouse will get embarrassed if you talk about how he or she has smelly socks to people you do not even know well.

Your client will not be impressed if he catches you making fun of his accent in front of other people.

Anything you say or do can affect the reputation and the relationships you build. The clearer your understanding of how you come off in social situations, the more guided your choices will be.

A person's reputation is formed from a collection of his previous words and actions while a relationship is built from a collection of previous experiences and interactions with another person. What if you have separate books for your reputation and each of your relationships? These books will automatically log everything you say and do.

Will you enjoy the things written about you? Do you admire this person and is this the person you aspire to be? Think carefully about these things. It may not be logged in imaginary books but the people you interact with will have memories of these interactions with you.

If you have social liabilities, you also have your social assets. These are the qualities that are unique to you and what attracts people to you.

To find out what your social assets are, you have to put yourself in a serious self-assessment once more. What draws people closer to you? What drives them away from you? Once you get a full grasp of these things, it will be easier for you to tweak the way you approach conversations, transactions, and even public speaking.

Try to think about the people you like spending time and conversing with. What makes you trust them? What makes having moments with them enjoyable? Now reverse this question. Ask yourself what people admire about you.

If you have great humor, people will go to you because they enjoy fun conversations with you. If you are a good planner, people will go to you for strategic advice. Some people have the gift of warmth, they can give emotional relief to troubled people. If you are one of them, then this is also an asset that you can add to your personal brand.



It will also be very helpful to find this out through the people you interact with. Find time to talk about your hesitations and questions with those you trust. It can be your boss, a good friend, or your family.

Ask your spouse or your parents when they enjoy your company the most. Take a look at how your boss responds to the things you say or do. If your boss is open to it, you may even ask them about it. These are what employee assessments are for. Take advantage of these assessments so you can use them to better your social skills.

Choose people you can listen to. This may be challenging at first. It is understandable to feel self-conscious when you ask people about yourself. If you choose the right people in your life, they will understand and they may even appreciate the fact that you are humbling yourself so that you can make improvements in your life. Those who truly care about you will most likely be supportive of this.

If making you aware of your social liabilities can help you foster relationships better, it's the same with finding out what your social assets are. Think of them as the currency you use to create connections with other people.

Remember to always see social engagements as an exchange. You can't really get people to want to be with you and work with you if they do not appreciate anything in your company, right?

It is not that people require things before they start building relationships with you. It is not about you. It is about the way you make them feel, the things they learn from you, and the things they get to share with you. Will you spend time with someone who makes you feel uncomfortable? Will you remember someone who you cannot have enjoyable or meaningful experiences with?



## PRACTICE BEING AUTHENTIC

I am sure you have heard of this before. Your personal brand is basically the compilation of you, your unique qualities, the things you aim for, and all the other things that make up the life that you want and the person you want to be.

So how is it different from your social assets?

Your social assets are the things you are good at. They are basically your main features and your selling point. It's what you have that makes people remember you and connect with you.

A personal brand, however, does not necessarily have to make considerations for what people want from you. It is looking beyond the requirements of others and knowing what makes you feel like your authentic self. There is no other way for you to figure out your personal brand other than honest self-discovery.

We have learned about this earlier as a means to understand yourself and your social tendencies. This time, though, we will use introspection as a means to get to know your personal priorities and source of happiness.

But first, why is this essential in gaining social intelligence?

For others to feel a connection and trust with us, we must strive to be more authentic. Have you ever felt uncomfortable with someone before and you got a hunch that this person was not being sincere towards you?

That may seem like a presumptuous thought to have but the truth is people do instinctively feel it when someone is not being truthful. If you experience it, others do too. If there was ever a time when you were not being yourself, there might have been a chance the other person felt it and he reacted in some way. Try and look back if this has ever happened to you and try to look at the cues you may have missed at that time.

No one likes to be deceived.

Lying is, of course, immoral. In philosophy, lying is bad because it is considered as a misuse of language which is essential to human societies. Language is a form of contract or commitment. When people lie, it is a commitment to a word that is not even true therefore those who have received lies are misled into something that is unjust.

Lying diminishes trust in any kind of relationship. Take note of the word that was used to describe language –commitment. Whenever you speak of something untrue, you are committing to this information. Lies are exhausting to protect and once they are exposed, it is likely impossible to rebuild the trust that was lost.

When you lie, you have to backtrack on all the things you said that day and you have to stick to them in the future. If this is a habit to you, the harder it is to cover up the holes in your story. Eventually, people may catch up to you and you are exposed when you least expect it. Do you realize just how tiring that can be?

Another reason why being authentic to your personal brand is important is that when you stand alongside other people, the only thing that makes you interesting and sets you apart from everybody else is actually your genuine self and no other. This is the only thing that is yours and no one else can take it away from you but you yourself.

Your personal brand is what guides you to stay true to your authentic self. It is easy to get lost in all the things that are happening in our lives especially today when we are exposed to a lot of different influences.

With the speed of globalization and the large presence of social media in our lives, it has become harder than ever to get to know our true selves. The way we value relationships, the people we aspire to be, and our very own self-worth is greatly affected by the orientation we get from a wide variety of sources.

The thing with being authentic is that you can only find it within yourself. You cannot follow someone else's path if it does not resonate with

you.

Imagine a jigsaw puzzle. You are given an assortment of puzzle pieces. Some of them are meant to fit your full picture and some of them belong to a different puzzle set. This is what it's like in the world today.

Not all the things you are exposed to match your personal brand. There is no way for you to accommodate everything.

In a puzzle, what happens to the full picture if you try and fit mismatched pieces together?

First, you will get frustrated. You try your best to force the pieces together and they just would not fit with each other. They may not even be in the same size range so you might even damage the puzzle pieces as you aggressively attach them to the other tiles.

Second, you have a harder time getting started and getting finished. You have an assortment of pieces that don't necessarily belong together. If you do not take a look at the pieces and start to get rid of those that don't match, you will keep going back and forth and get lost in a loop of confusion.

Your time and energy are wasted and there's a chance you may never even get to finish the puzzle.

Lastly, nobody gets the whole picture. The main goal of building a puzzle is to end up with an actual full image. Because you wanted to include pieces that did not belong to your set, you now have a distorted final output that people have a hard time understanding.

You end up with an uneven, unnatural picture that no one gets the point of.

That's what happens to your self-image if you try and force yourself to accommodate all the influences you see. You will just end up frustrated with your energy wasted. There is nothing more tiring than forcing yourself to be someone you are not at peace to be. Your time and effort are being depleted but you only get a distorted version of yourself in the end.

We can also liken this process to wearing a mask. The mask works in two ways, it hides what's underneath it and it allows you to portray a certain persona on the outside. It can be anything that you can think of. It can even be a replica of your real image.

Most people have a tendency to curate how they present themselves to others with the goal of portraying what they think the best image of themselves is. However, the person places his or herself in a situation where his genuine personality and self-image are being compromised in the process of doing so. This affects a person's self-esteem and happiness.

The caveat with masks is that although you get to hide your identity, it doesn't actually erase your true self. What you're only doing is pushing it back down but it's still spilling out of you and everyone else in front of you just sees a watered-down version between the real you and the person you're pretending to be.

The key thing is you're exerting effort to actually bury your genuine self and pretend to be this ideal you have inside of your head. There even comes a point when you are no longer able to tell whether you're still pretending or not.

Oftentimes, people put on masks because they are not comfortable with the idea they have of themselves. It is not always because they are ashamed of their true selves.

One, it could be because they have never tried to show their true colors before and they are afraid that others will not like the real them very much. This is a fear of failure.

Two, it is a good excuse to risk mistakes. There are people who find it hard to admit to their misgivings. Sometimes it's about pride, at times it is a fear of accountability. Since the real identity is hidden, there's suddenly no responsibility or liability. The disguise fools you into thinking that anything you say or do while you're wearing the mask won't put the real you in danger.

This system can create two different paths for you. One is you slowly become the person you are pretending to be and all is well and good for you. The other is that you eventually are not able to catch up with these different personas and your mask slowly disintegrates and the real person is revealed.

The connections we make and the trust we build with others rely almost entirely on the person we show ourselves to be in front of other people.

Being able to establish a personal brand that is authentic to you will help you manage and invest your time and energy in the right social situations. It also helps you connect with people better because they feel your sincerity and they see your consistency.

However, being authentic is not always easy for many people. Most people don't even see when they are being inauthentic.

It takes a lot of courage, humility, and introspection to be able to identify when you are truly yourself. Being authentic does not only involve who your genuine self is. It also includes knowing who you want to be and who you never want to be.

Here are a few steps you can take to practice being authentic:

## 1. INCREASE YOUR SELF-AWARENESS

Masks are an easy go-to for a lot of people. Do not worry, you are not the only one wearing a mask and neither are you being condemned for even wearing one.

Masks are not always a bad thing. When you are in the workplace, you have a persona that you try to maintain because it keeps everything in order. You get to focus more and you are in keeping with the professional atmosphere because you respect your colleagues and the environment you are in. This is a way for people to adapt and do well in a given situation.

However, there are masks that are unnecessary and can be used for destructive purposes. One example is spending beyond your means to dress up your social status. This will be a cycle that never ends well.

The important thing is that you recognize the masks you wear and you know when and where it starts and ends. This requires a great sense of self-awareness which you can achieve through introspection.

Think about the masks you wear and your reasons for doing so. Identify whether these masks are in conflict with your personal brand and never confuse them for your genuine self.



## 2. AVOID FILTERS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Being your raw, authentic self is not always easy especially when you are in an unfamiliar environment. Because of this, you feel the need to stay in your bubble to protect yourself from scrutiny. All of us have fears and insecurities but it is okay to be vulnerable sometimes. The only way for you to find your true self and establish your personal brand is by taking risks.

Engage in raw interactions with different people and observe how they respond to you. Most of the time, this will result in the same courtesy coming from them. You will start to notice that people are more relaxed and comfortable to be real around you, too. You connect with them more and the gestures you share become more sincere and authentic.

When you are sincere, the other party catches on and there is a sense of trust that is built between the two of you. You will be able to tell when the other person becomes more at ease with you.

The more you practice this, the more you realize when you are most comfortable being yourself too. When your sincere actions are validated and reciprocated, you are more encouraged to take this approach in future situations.

This is not to say that you will no longer make adjustments to accommodate the person in front of you. There is still a difference between talking to someone you work with and your childhood friend.

You always have to keep going back to your social liabilities. Being raw does not mean you get rid of all formalities you practice to make others feel more comfortable around you.

Learn to improvise and be more in touch with your intuition so you can navigate your way towards authenticity without being tactless or arrogant. This way you get to overcome your hesitations and self-doubt.

### 3. BE HONEST

Authenticity will always include honesty for reasons that are obvious. Lying should never be a constant routine in your life. This will only lead to a dangerous cycle and people are guaranteed to catch on sooner or later.

Risking the loss of trust and confidence of the people around you will just make things more complicated and will require even more effort from you.

This is not to say that you have to be brutally honest about everything. If your significant other makes you breakfast and she burns the toast, the usual reaction is to say “It’s okay”. Even when you are already late for your job and you are hungrier than a lion, you say this because it is not worth upsetting your partner with.

What you have to see is the intention behind your lie. Lying about your thoughts on burnt toast is totally different from lying about owning an expensive car. What thoughts will the person you are lying to have after you share false information with them? Who is affected by the lies you are speaking? Why do you even have to lie to begin with?

Ask yourself these questions first if you feel the need to lie.

#### 4. JEALOUSY CAN GET THE BEST OUT OF YOU

Your best friend has his own house, a new car, a beautiful girlfriend, is successful in his career, and on top of it, he is stylish and handsome. You aspire for all of these things for yourself because you see that he has it all. What do you do?

It is not bad to be motivated and to work hard to achieve and get great things for yourself. What is bad is when your standards come from the accomplishments of others. Your best friend acquired those things not because he wanted to compete with you. He achieved those things to better himself. That is what you also need to do.

It is the saddest thing when a person bases his happiness and fulfillment from how he compares to others. If you want a new car, get it. If you want your own house, get it. But think very well about what these things are for.

Chasing the standards of others is an endless road. You can never be truly fulfilled because you always look at what others have accomplished around you instead of your own victories.

There will always be someone better than you in some ways. This does not make you any less of a person. What is important is that you know who you are and you strive to be better at the things you sincerely want.

When you see other people getting the things you wanted for yourself as well, work hard for it but never ask yourself why they were able to get it before you did. Every person has his own obstacles to overcome.

Do not mistake greed for goals.

## 5. LEARN TO PROCESS FEEDBACK

Feedback is not something you should be wary of. In fact, feedback should be valued. When a person reacts to you and tells you how your behavior affects them, the first thing you should do is listen.

You do this not just because you want to please that person. You do this because you want to get to know yourself even more and how you come across to other people.

It is possible that your words and your gestures do not always represent your authentic self at times. Learn from this feedback so that you can better and more effectively communicate your true self to others.

Your actions after finding out how people react to your behavior are completely yours to decide on. Make sure it still fits with your personal brand and the person you aspire to be. This exercise is meant to empower you to make better choices in the future.

After getting feedback, avoid making excuses for yourself. If this is you come off to other people, that is your responsibility. Yes, others can be wrong about you at times but it is better to know why and how you make these impressions to them.

Making excuses and admitting to your mistakes are both habit-forming actions. If making excuses becomes a habit to you, it will be hard for you to realize when you are wrong. This prevents you from making positive adjustments to yourself. However, if admitting to your mistakes is the habit you choose, you are always given the chance to really learn from your mistakes and acknowledge the changes you have to make. Which habit will you choose?

## 6. ALLOW YOURSELF TO CHANGE

Think of authenticity as a goal that you have for yourself. It is not an innate quality that naturally comes out of people. A part of being authentic is accepting that no one is perfect. Mistakes and self-doubt are completely natural.

Allow yourself to make the most out of this journey. If you have committed mistakes in the past, make peace with it, and figure out where to adjust.

Stop worrying about feeling small and being ridiculed for your flaws. You are defined by your actions and not what others think or say about you. It is what you do afterward that matters.

If your mistakes are really bothering you, just think of it this way, you are now aware of the things you did wrong. There is no possible way for you to turn back time and do things differently at that moment. You can only move forward.

But, unlike before, you are now aware of the consequences of your actions. The best way to make up for your mistakes is to try your best not to repeat them again. Do not let shame get in the way of your self-improvement. Take this as an opportunity and be serious about doing better after this.



## STOP TRYING TO GET EVERYONE'S STOP

Probably the biggest hurdle when it comes to being authentic and sticking to your personal brand is when you start trying to get other people's approval. That said, it can keep you further away from improving your social intelligence.

Trying to get everyone's approval is a big problem. The hardest part about it is that it is perfectly natural to feel like you have to get on everybody's good side to be able to socialize gracefully.

Wanting to feel loved, needed, smart, and attractive are all indications of a person's need for approval. These are all-natural and it's perfectly human to want to be accepted.

In fact, this is something that's found in nature itself. Peacocks spread their colorfully patterned feathers to attract a potential mate. Birds of paradise use dance as a mating ritual to invite a prospective partner. Baboons form cliques based on the personality of their peers.

We humans have our version of such practices. It is ingrained in our nature to feel as though we need to be accepted to be able to thrive and survive.

When I was in elementary school, I had two mates that I spent most of my time after school with. We take lunch breaks together. We get out of class together and head to this one guy's, let's call him Gary's, home. I was a bit of a math, language, and science geek and the three of us will spend our time studying and conversing about such things together.

A couple of years later, one of the popular kids in school started being buddies with me. We got along and soon enough I was part of the cool pack in our school. It happened quickly and I never noticed my departure from my group with Gary. I just started not hanging out with them anymore.

It was great to be with the "it" crowd. We had our own table in the cafeteria and we always had someplace to go to. It felt really great to be

worthy of this spot in the group.

A year into this new group I am now a part of, I no longer spent time away from school reading about science and math. In fact, my grades started to plummet. Well, I had A's so it was not really a big deal. I was not failing any of my classes. It did not look like my life was getting ruined. I hung out with them until high school.

The first year of high school was exciting. My group was getting more popular than ever. We would go out every day after school. We eat out, go to the hippest places, and keep up with the latest trends back then.

And then there was one small issue. I did not have enough money to keep up with our lifestyle. I started not going to the usual cool places with them. Instead of going out, I started getting interested in the stuff I liked before. I started reading again. I spent more time at home and in the library compared to hanging out with my clique.

Because I was immersing myself in all of these things, it was spilling out of me and the excitement of sharing my interests with my mates grew. I would talk about the glories of math, science, and nature with my clique. Unfortunately, it just was not interesting to them. At times they would flat out laugh at my face because I sounded like a nerd to them like it was such a comical thing to be.

Honestly, there were times I bought into it. I asked myself why I was going back to this childhood interest of mine that I had already gotten rid of. Whenever I felt I was being ridiculed, I would find ways to get another dose of coolness. Money was still an issue and I started feeling like I had to get the money to be able to hang out with them again so that I could go back to being the cool guy they preferred.

One day, I was walking towards our lunch table in school and my mates completely ignored me and walked out of the cafeteria. It was embarrassing and I thought maybe I was just being too sensitive about it. Maybe they



were just done with lunch and had somewhere else to be. The same thing happened everywhere I followed them too.

I felt so small. Yet, the smaller I felt, the more I had to chase after them. I just had to be in the group again and it was my fault because I started boring them. I needed to do something, anything to get my friends back.

I never did. I finished high school, went through college, and started working without my “cool” friends with me. This incident left a bitter taste in my tongue and I never had a group again. I had friends but I never hung out with the same people constantly. It was traumatizing to me and I figured all people are like that.

The cool guys continued to be friends with each other over the years. With the age of social media, it became an annoying thing to see them together and grow up as close friends. Admittedly, it still pisses me off when I see them post pictures of their parties and get-togethers. I feel bad when I see them happy together with their wives and kids.

I felt shamed by these people and in my head, I wished the group falls apart and I would be vindicated from the injustice of being abandoned by them.

Then one day, my old friend Gary contacted me. He brought along our third friend and we had drinks after work. It was like nothing changed between the three of us. We shared our love for our old interests and new interests were explored as well. We had a great time.

Over the course of this meeting, how I left the group was brought up. They were not angry with me or anything. They just said it was surprising to them that I was no longer spending time with them.

I tried to look back on it and I honestly did not think I was leaving my two friends behind. I just thought I was with new friends that I enjoyed more. And that’s what they thought too.

They told me they felt bad when they witnessed how I started losing my new friends and that they saw how that experience had transformed me.

Although they felt sorry for me, we were all kids and we simply did not know how to approach the situation back then. We all moved forward and now we're here.

No, this was not a prodigal son story of me getting back into the group once more. But, meeting with them showed me how easy it is to lose sight of your own self when you get into a mindset of chasing other people's approval. Regret is something I have learned to manage and I can honestly say it is not worth dwelling on things like that. However, the lessons gathered from that experience should never be erased.

All the things I did to chase the approval of others were exhausting mentally, physically, financially, and emotionally. But when I look back on it, I did not have to go through all of that if I had just realized what really made me happy at that time.

I had two friends all along that I shared my love for the things that piqued my interest. This is not to say that I should not have been friends with anybody else but them. The point is I lost myself because I favored someone else's idea of a better me.

We can continue to thrive even if we maintain our own personal brands. We were all kids back then but the "cool kids" may have seen through me back then. I was not myself anymore and I was already struggling with my own pretensions.

I cringe at the thought of my old self back then. I said things to keep them interested. I bought things that did not really matter to me but were a thing to them. I hung out with them even though I no longer felt like it and that took my energy away from the things I actually liked.

The trick with the human mind is: non-acceptance is equal to rejection. This burdens us so much and it pushes us to place our energies in the things that frustrate us.

Because I am the lead in my story, it looks like I was bullied and the "cool kids" rejected me. However, take a look at my trio with Gary. I did

the same thing to them but it never actually bothered me. In all honesty, I did not think much of the abandonment I did. I was simply moving forward.

And that was it. It took years for me to realize that we had different interests and it was not always about making me feel bad. The very fact that no matter what I did I never really connected with them again shows that it was not about getting favors from me. My brand no longer fits theirs.

Looking at it that way makes it easier to understand. It is not always like how it is portrayed in movies. I never thought of Gary as a bad, boring guy. That thought never crossed my mind. It was never personal.

Gary had the right perspective on things. He knew me and he knew it was not about him. He never chased me. He never spoke badly about the “cool kids” just to get on my good side.

Gary went on and continued to be Gary. One day, he felt like talking to me again so he made the call and we hung out.

Meanwhile, I was drenched in self-pity and self-doubt. Honestly, I am so used to being bitter about the other group and I still would not get myself to be casual with them again.

The feeling of rejection has a good way of killing your self-esteem. You are convinced that you are the opposite of the things you aspire to be. You are not loved. You are not needed. You are dumb. You are ugly. These feelings start to consume you. Suddenly, you become this distrustful, hateful person who finds it impossible to see others happy.

In a study, researchers found that rejection induces the same response in the brain as physical pain. Another study shows that all but 2 of 15 school shooters were rejected. Rejection causes a yearning for retaliation and closing off in a person's brain.

Gary has thought me a precious lesson that I am lucky to have received. The feeling of rejection starts with how you interpret the differences you have with other people.

I was not all that bad as a kid, though. I got something right.

I am very fortunate to have a close relationship with my parents. During those tumultuous times in my youth, I had them to talk to. However, I found one of their responses to be ridiculous.

My father told me that the reason I was being rejected was that I was starting to look like a threat. My peers were not very happy to be friends with someone who had the mind to accommodate valuable knowledge and this seems like something they could not achieve for themselves. They did not like me because I was better than them

It was not the idea that they were jealous that sounded ridiculous to me and it could have been true as well. What I found ridiculous was the idea that I was the focus of their behavior and that they think I am better than them.

This is ridiculous because it will send me on another destructive path. I did not think I had to be better than them. I did not like the idea of lifting myself up for them. It just felt unnatural to me.

Back then I didn't know why I felt that way. Now that I am older, I realize that there is no need for me to be better than them for them to hate on me. Those feelings of jealousy that they had, it was not on me. Even if I do tons better than them or so much worse than them, it does not matter.

I cannot solve their own insecurities and thinking that I am better than them will not solve my insecurities as well. The best way to look at it is that we just did not click anymore. It was nobody's fault. Dealing with these things should be met with a lot more kindness but not everyone has that capacity and expecting that from everyone will only break your heart. Always remember that it is not always personal.

There is also no point in convincing yourself that you are better than those who you feel rejected you. What matters is your genuine self. You are a completely separate entity from them and if you have done all that you can that is in keeping with your personal brand, it is no longer your battle to fight.

Some people will never like you and there are people you will never like too. That's just how life is.

Do not worry about other people's approval. Your approval of your own self and happiness is the one that counts the most.

Is this the life that you want? What do you need to do to get the life that you want? Focus on that and let others be.

At the end of the day, if the people you spend time with and the actions you make do not fit your aspirations and your values, then you will never find fulfillment and happiness.



## IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Now, it's time to focus on communicating with others. A book on social intelligence will not make sense if it does not address the way you communicate your inner thoughts and needs.

The very reason why humans are capable of gaining social intelligence is that they have the capacity of interacting and being understood by others. This is how we are able to form relationships and participate in social organizations.

Communication plays a big role in improving your social intelligence and effective communication may mean the difference between a successful and a failed social relationship.

At this point in the book, you may have gotten to know yourself better. This is the most essential thing to learn before you work on improving your communication skills. That's the very reason why we spent the first few chapters trying to understand your inner self first.

If you do not know yourself well enough, there is no way for you to express your feelings and ideas clearly. Once you have a firm understanding of yourself that is when you are ready to plot your way towards good and effective communication.

It is like trying to cook a stew without having all the ingredients first. You are halfway into cooking and then you realize you need something that's missing from your pantry but you go ahead with it anyway. What happens then? You do not get the best out of your dish. It may not even taste the way you intended it to be and the regret sets in.

Since you now know the steps to get a full view of yourself. We will now delve into the importance of communicating yourself to others well.

The heart of social interactions is effective communication. It is very important to improve your communication skills if you want to develop your social intelligence.

Notice how we say effective communication and not just communication alone? It is because anyone can communicate. You can communicate all you want, as often as you would like, and as loudly as you can but your message and intention never completely come through. Even if the other person hears you, he or she may not fully understand what you are trying to communicate. Or worse, the person might end up misinterpreting you.

Instead of being able to get your point across, you get into this frustrating exchange that ends up as a waste of time and energy.

So, how do you improve your communication?

To be able to communicate competently, you have to first develop what is called verbal fluency. Verbal fluency enables a person to articulate his or her ideas freely without strain.

A way to better understand verbal fluency is to compare it to dancing. To improve your dancing skills, you must develop your reflexes and muscles well. As you work on your reflexes and muscle strength, dancing becomes much easier. You will get better at executing the dance steps once you master these two things. Dancing becomes an instinct to you and you are able to do more difficult moves with less effort.

That's what it's like to have strong verbal fluency. As you practice good communication more and more, the better you are able to articulate yourself with less effort.

If you use steps in dancing, you use language in communication. Your verbal fluency determines how well you are able to use language in communication. Once verbal fluency is harnessed, language becomes instinctive to you and you will be able to manage your energy better when you are engaging in social interaction.

The thing with language is that it is actually a combination of your verbal and non-verbal expressions. People often constrain language to



words and that is why there are people who say all the right words without getting their intended responses.

Body language is an important part of communication. You can communicate a lot of things even without the use of words.

Take babies for example. There is no other way for them to express happiness, sadness, and frustration but through their facial expressions and body gestures. Yet, you understand them.

This is also the reason why people who do not share the same verbal language get to somehow communicate. You must take note of the gestures you make and the practices you have whenever you are trying to interact with someone.

Take a look at your habits as well. For example, when you are doing public speaking, too much movement can become distracting to your audience. This may also be caused by a lack of confidence. When people are unsure of the way they say things and the words that they speak, the body turns to fidgeting.

Body language says a ton about a person, perhaps even more than verbal communication. It's one of the toughest things to control and it is hard to restrain.

Another non-verbal you can use is to maintain eye contact. By maintaining eye contact, you lock your audience in. You appear confident and assertive so you do not lose their attention. It also shows commitment so your audience tries to listen more closely to you.

Space is also a non-verbal that people usually forget about. If you get too close to a person during a confrontation, you might make them feel uncomfortable. The other person may take this as an intrusion in their personal space and he ends up focusing on closing off from you.

Even the way you are dressed is considered non-verbal language. If you are dressed down, this sends a message that you are casual. In a business setting, this may not be the best thing. If you also dress up too formally for

a casual event, it may not match the relaxed atmosphere and people may get intimidated by this.

Non-verbal language also includes voice –not statements, but a voice. Your audience reads into the timing and pacing of your words, the dynamics or loudness and softness of your voice, your tone, and inflections.

You have to be aware of these things because your audience gets signals and give meaning to these things, too. The changes you make to any of these elements can affect the way your audience responds to you.

Meanwhile, being in close proximity to the person you are talking to can also be a signal for trust and intimacy if such a precedent is established early on in the interaction.

The best way to avoid unnecessary and mismatched non-verbal is to become self-aware. Try and practice talking in front of the mirror and notice if what you are saying matches the gestures you make. No one will ever believe you if you say you are happy yet your face is upside down and you are wailing your lungs out.

You can also get yourself a partner who can critique the way you move as you converse. Ask them for feedback and take note of both the things you do well in and the things you have to improve on. Finding out about your good points can help you improve your confidence further too.

Now we go to the traditional form of language which is verbal language. This is, of course, an essential part of human interaction and a huge part of social intelligence.

The most important thing you have to practice in verbal communication is clarity. The first mistake of people who aspire to be good speakers is that they decorate their speech too much with unnecessary words. They focus too much on sounding smart versus being understood.

To be understood, you have to be clear and to the point. There is no need to clutter your messages with flowery words and pointless jargon. Use simple English as much as possible so that your audience can focus more on

your statement and less effort is needed just to try and decode whatever it is you are trying to say. If you find yourself using intricate language and giving unnecessary details to pad your perceived insecurities, stop and take a moment to adjust your language.

Make it your goal to be able to articulate your statements as concisely as possible. Conversations are not a competition in the number of words you can come up with. When it comes to effective communication, quality is preferred over quantity.

You have a problem if you are more comfortable saying, “My myocardium, the scientific word for heart, is experiencing some sort of suffering because I have not been able to see you for a very long time.” Versus, “I miss you”.

Always start conversations with intent. Do not tire your audience before you even land your point. Beating around the bush is not helpful to anyone. It only depletes time and energy.

When you start conversations with your main statement, your audience is guided properly in the conversation and you both spend your time and energy entertaining more valid points.

Beating around the bush is also a sign of self-doubt and lack of confidence. You are only fooling yourself if you keep dragging your speech because you are unsure of your statement. You will only end up confusing your audience and this is the last thing you want if your goal is to communicate effectively.

Lastly, the best approach to language is to just be simple and straightforward in your communication. Take it easy and do not let your jitters get the best of you. Always go back to who you are and what your priorities are so that you can maintain being upfront and clear whenever you try to communicate.



## COMMUNICATE LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT

There are a number of things we use communication for. Communication is used to share information, give opinions, ask questions, express our desires and needs, participate socially, and many more. A lot of devices and systems are created just so that people are able to communicate.

According to Marco Polo, Genghis Khan had horse riders pass messages between stations 25 miles apart. This system allowed messages to be delivered as far as 300 miles a day and some attribute the success of his empire to this communication system.

Can you imagine the world without cellphones and the internet today? If airplanes did not have a communication system, traveling by air would become dangerous. Having an emergency hotline line like 911 can save lives. Because it is so essential to our lives, opportunities for communication are created every day.

In the previous chapter, we discussed how to communicate effectively. Now we will talk about when and why it is important to communicate. There is no other way for people to understand you and for you to get through to anyone without communication. Having the right tools to communicate is pointless if you do not use them for the right purposes.

Communication is what you have to invest in interpersonal relationships. Without it, there is no way for you to build anything with anyone. Transactions are a form of communication. Chitchatting is communication. Teaching is communication. A smile, a hug, a kiss are expressions that communicate.

In the workplace, the system will break down if even a small amount of information is left out. Say a client has emailed a proposal to you and it does not reach the department it intends to communicate with. The proposal never gets to you. Nothing happens and the deal will never exist.

Besides the need to exchange information, we are also able to influence others through communication. What we say and do can affect other people in many ways. It can motivate, strengthen, and build relationships. It can change a person's mindset, encourage him, and it can also bring relief to a person who is struggling.

Mental health is an issue many people are struggling with and sometimes being able to communicate is what makes the right impact in a person's condition. There are people who are not able to express their hopelessness and fears but once they start receiving the right motivation and relief, their whole outlook in life changes.

That is what communication can do all you have to do is learn when and how you should use it.

So how can you apply communication in a social setting?

## 1. A SMILE GOES A LONG WAY

The simple gesture creates an endless ripple effect. When you get to the office and your coworkers greet you with a smile, it changes your mood and demeanor. You respond with a smile and start greeting everyone else with a smile too. Everyone ends up smiling. And then, one coworker arrives late with an angry look in his face. You all begin to be bothered by this person. You say hi to him with a pleasant and sincere grin. Instead of responding nicely to you, this person does not even look at you. How would this make you feel?

Even your facial expression can send signals to the people around you. Be aware of your nonverbal and adjust it according to the effect you want on people.

## 2. MAKE FRIENDS

Get to know people by talking about yourself and listening to their stories too. Do not hesitate to open up to people as long as it is in the right context of the situation you are in. If it is just a casual chat, talk about your interests lightly, and let the conversation progress.

Small interactions can lead to deeper relationships too. It all depends on the amount of investment you put into the relationship. Just remember to keep your social liabilities in mind and be authentic with your communication.



### 3. BE VULNERABLE SOMETIMES

Oftentimes, people are afraid of communication because of insecurities stemming from inexperience and previous trauma. Do not let this get in the way of connecting to people. Mistakes are mistakes. The most important thing is that you recognize them, move forward, and adjust.

Insecurities and mistakes can be sources of motivation as well. When you start to talk about your fears and worries, other people are given the opportunity to help you with them and also to learn from them.

It is also a way for leaders to encourage growth and become more approachable. When leaders are open to talk about mistakes, it builds trust and confidence within their team. The other team members are more comfortable asking for guidance and they are also more at ease at recognizing and adjusting their mistakes.

#### 4. TELL STORIES

Stories can have a lot of influence on people. They can get motivation, hope, and confidence just by listening to powerful stories that resonate with them. The stories do not have to be complicated and lengthy. As long as they carry great lessons and relatable situations, they can impact the lives of other people and sometimes even communities.

This is why the stories of great people are told and they continue to fascinate and motivate people around the world. The stories of great leaders, heroes, and other inspiring icons. These stories affect the lives of many.

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE

Tell people what you appreciate about them. Do not hesitate to compliment someone for a job well done or for any good deed, small or big. It gives positive motivation and it gives confidence to people.

Think about the time you were thanked for something? How did it make you feel? Pay a positive experience forward. People will be encouraged to do good when they are recognized for the good things they do.

## 6. TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU NEED

If you want to spend time with someone, tell them. If you need space, say it. If you need more direction, ask for it. When something offends you, confront it. Even babies try to communicate when they are hungry or need a diaper change.

Not being able to tell people what you need only creates animosity for you and confusion to others. It is your responsibility to let people know what you need. You should not expect everyone to automatically know how you feel and where your discomforts are coming from.

Find a proper place and time for it then discuss it with the other person with clarity and respect. Do not be passive-aggressive about it. As long as you are dealing with a sensible person and you are respectful with your request, the other person will discuss things with you in the proper manner.

## 7. ASK QUESTIONS

Do not hesitate to ask about things you are interested in and the things you want to learn from. Just make sure to ask respectfully and ask at the right place and at the right time. You can learn a lot from other people. Sometimes you even think you know about something fully well but hearing about it from other people shows you what you missed.

## 8. RESPOND TO PEOPLE

When you receive a message, acknowledge receipt and respond appropriately. If someone sends you a lengthy, informative message, try to reciprocate the effort that remains within the context of your conversation. Remember to keep it concise and sincere, though.

When you get an email that is detailed and helpful to you, you cannot just respond with “K”. Thank the person, acknowledge how it is helpful, and do it quickly.

Delaying your response will only risk forgetting about it. Also, when you delay a response, the other person may think you either have not received their message or the message was not received well.

## 9. THANK PEOPLE

Acknowledge people when they offer ideas and suggestions. Say thank you when you are given an update or a heads up.

When you ignore these gestures, people will think their actions were unhelpful and unappreciated. This sends a bad cue to your peer especially if their input was requested. They will stop connecting with you and, worse, they might even get offended by your lack of response.

Thanking people will also motivate them to help you out even more. When people see that they are helping and that they are recognized for their efforts, they are more willing to do more to help you.

There are many other situations that will require effective communication from you. It will all depend on your goals and intentions. Just remember these few important things to guide you through.

Practice so that you will gain courage and confidence.

Be respectful so that people will respect you too.

Be sensitive about other people's needs and comforts.

Know the right timing.

Be clear with your communication.

Do not send mixed signals.

Realize the power of your words.

Appreciate it when people engage with you.

Socially intelligent people understand the function and the importance of effective and consistent communication. If you can make these things a habit, you will see its good effects. When you see the importance of it, you will be driven to put more time and effort into communication.





## PAY ATTENTION TO OTHER PEOPLE

It is true that people are wired differently. Some people are extroverts and others can be introverts by nature, too. Extroverts get a little more advantage when it comes to honing their communication skills because they tend to get more practice over introverts.

However, there is a way for anyone, introverted or not, to better their communication without having to express themselves too much and that is to practice active listening.

If social interactions are a two-way street, then aside from learning to express yourself you also have to learn to pay attention to other people. Although the goal of most people who are in pursuit of developing their social intelligence is to be heard and understood, there is power in learning from others too.

By listening to and observing others, you can help nurture your social intelligence. The mere act of paying attention to others without necessarily opening up is a very effective way to learn how to establish successful interpersonal relationships.

One struggle in being introverted is that they are drained whenever they engage in socialization. They do not dislike people. They just have a lower stock of energy intended for social interactions. They would rather reserve this energy for more meaningful connections.

For those who prefer to keep their social circles smaller, it is difficult to foster relationships and choose the persons you would want to connect with.

A benefit you can get from active listening is that as you try to understand other people more, you learn to trust and let them in. Being able to learn about them by mere observation and listening can help reserve your energy and make you better at choosing who you connect with.

If your social endurance is not an issue, active listening is still a very important skill to learn. The problem with those who find it easier to

express themselves before trying to listen to the other person is that they lose sight of the real purpose of communication which is to connect.

I repeat: social interactions are a two-way street. If you go on and on without considering the effect you have on your audience, your words become useless and you do not gain anything from your encounter.

Stop telling yourself that you have done and said everything but you ended up with nothing. That is exactly the problem. It was just you that said and did everything. There was no exchange between you and the person you were trying to connect with. Ask yourself if you noticed any sort of response from that other person. If you got nothing, that counts as a response too.

If a dog keeps barking at you and no matter what you say or do he just continues to bark at you, would you stick around? Will you drain yourself out for something that does not entertain any response from you?

It is understandably difficult to restrain yourself when you are too excited or too frustrated about something. But it will only be a terrible waste of energy if you spill everything that matters to you and the person you shared it with just ends up too overwhelmed and unwilling to accommodate you further.

Focusing on paying attention to others is challenging. No one ever said it was easy but it is necessary if you want to improve on your social intelligence.

Here are some simple steps you can take to practice active listening:

## 1. DO NOT INTERRUPT.

This will require a lot of patience from you but it is worth the rewards.

Interrupting someone shows that you are not interested in whatever he or she has to say. You are flat out telling them, “No, my words are more important than yours”.

Two things happen if you go down this road. One, you weaken your chances of having a meaningful exchange with this person. By not letting them have a voice in your conversation, you end up missing out on the things that are important to them. Without knowing what is valuable to them, you have nothing to offer to this person that is worth their while.

Two, you set a precedent of disrespect between the two of you. The golden rule is still in effect when it comes to social intelligence. Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.

If you want to be respected, show the same courtesy to those you interact with.

If it is the other person that keeps interrupting you, just keep in mind that you are gaining more by not doing the same thing. Do not let him interfere with your process. Anything you practice constantly will become a habit and you must choose your habits wisely.

## 2. TAKE TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT SOMEONE ELSE IS SAYING BEFORE YOU RESPOND.

Do not listen just to respond. Keeping quiet is the farthest thing from active listening. If you are merely waiting for your turn to speak and you are not paying attention to what the other person is saying, you still end up failing at this task.

The main goal of active listening is to learn communication from others and tweak the social devices you make use of. When a person sees that their statements and opinions are valued, they are drawn to the listener more. Before you respond, see to it that you acknowledge what the other person has said. Really looking into what this person has said will also guide your response better.

For example, you want to eat pizza at an Italian restaurant. This person, on the other hand, keeps talking about seafood. Because you want to keep insisting on your favorite Italian restaurant, you forget that they actually serve seafood there, too. You had a good intention because you wanted to share something you enjoy with this person and you are convinced they will appreciate it as much as you do too. But instead of having a lovely time and getting both the things you want, you miss out on this opportunity because you were too focused and hasty with getting your ideas across.

### 3. TAKE CUES FROM PEOPLE AROUND YOU AND LEARN THE RIGHT BODY LANGUAGE.

Scan the room and take a look at how people are behaving around you and how everyone is participating in their own social interactions. You do not have to stare at them and scare them away. Just notice the simple things; a smile, a nod, a touch, their posture, their voice. See how their social exchanges work.

From there you will get an idea of how you can tweak your social devices. You also get an idea of what turns people off.

This may not seem like much but once you get into a similar situation as to what you have observed, you suddenly practice the things you have learned from this.

You may not notice it at first but if you routinely review the way you approach social situations, you might be able to recognize that you have applied what you learned from mere observation.

#### 4. LISTEN TO THE INFLECTIONS IN WHAT OTHERS SAY, WHICH CAN GIVE YOU CLUES TO WHAT THE PERSON REALLY MEANS.

Inflections keep languages dynamic and make it fully customizable to any person when needed. There is a cliché that women are not really okay when they simply say “OK”.

This is because people are making use of a trick inflections do to words. In fact, inflections have evolved with the wider use of text language. “K.” and “okay <3” now have different meanings even though the base words are the same. This shows just how important it is to take note of inflections. A lot of misunderstandings occur when the changes in inflections are not acknowledged. This is an instance where paying attention to people becomes really handy.

To keep your focus in paying attention to people, find the value in your interaction. Think clearly about why you are interacting with this person.

Do you work with this person? If yes, then think about how your interactions with them affect the camaraderie and productivity in the office.

Do you enjoy this person? If yes, then remind yourself that getting to know someone requires paying attention to the things they like, things that motivate them, and things that disappoint them.

Paying attention to people is a social currency as well. You only get what you give. So invest time and energy in giving attention to other people too. Not only will it enable you to build stronger connections, but it will also foster a more positive and respectful culture within your relationships.



## LOOKING AT THINGS FROM SOMEONE ELSE'S PERSPECTIVE

Continuing with the importance of paying attention to other people, one of the things we all have to learn about others is that everyone has different experiences that affect the things they do today.

Maybe the world would have been a more peaceful place if everyone shared similar perspectives. However, it would have made this world quite boring and we humans would not have made much progress if that was the case.

There are those who were raised in individualistic societies and there are those who were raised in societies that encourage a sense of belongingness within a tribe or within a family. Some people were also taught to prioritize standing out in a crowd.

These differences define our lives but these differences also mean we will always be in opposition to others. It does not matter who they are and what the circumstances are. You will have differences with your spouse, your boss, your family, and even your friends.

It is not a question of who is right and who is wrong. What makes things difficult is when people assume that their beliefs are better and more correct than those of others. This creates resentment and animosity leading to damaged relationships and failed communication. You will see this happen in autocratic societies where subordinates are given low motivation and have developed resentment towards their leaders.

Respecting the views and perspectives of others is necessary for fostering successful interpersonal relationships. When their values and ideas are respected, people are more willing to participate fairly and happily in social interactions. You only get what you give.

Imagine having a conversation with someone about the food that you enjoy. If you enjoy rice and that person doesn't, it will be terrible if he tells



you that rice is impossible to like and that you should stop liking it. How will this make you feel?

This other person has no regard for how this thing matters to you because he thinks what he knows and what he prefers is the standard. If you are dealing with such a person, are you still willing to continue engaging in a conversation with them?

What more if the rice had so much value in your life? What if it is the only thing you have in life as a source of food and nutrition? It will surely make you feel like this person has no ability whatsoever of being able to see what is valuable to another person. Your needs do not matter much to him. If that was the case, then why would you bother opening yourself up to them when they seem like they do not have the capacity to accommodate what is essential to others?

That person could be you if you do not make an effort to see things in someone else's eyes and if you do not see value in other people's circumstances, feelings, and beliefs.

This, however, does not automatically mean that you have to adopt the views that are opposite to yours. You reverse the situation, then, and you end up with your own resentments and failed communication.

What looking at other people's perspective requires you to do is to keep an open mind and make it your goal to fully understand what others have to say. If you have the right to be heard and hold a different opinion that is your own, then others should also have the same rights as you.

Listening fully to the ideals and principles of others leads you to the right actions and forms of communication you need to apply to be able to build a strong relationship with others. This is not because your ideas do not matter, this is because you are dealing with another person who has his own feelings and own convictions. The only way you can live and work together is by respecting each other's priorities and boundaries.

If you are wrong, then change. If you are right, then hold your ground. Respect is not equal to submission. Respect is the acceptance and acknowledgment of the things that are essential to each person's happiness and fulfillment.

You can maintain a level of respect even when you do not agree with another person's views. Explain why your ideals are important without making the person feel like they do not matter. Strive to state your feelings, opinions, and beliefs tactfully and with clarity. If you are dealing with a sensible person, you will be understood and heard.

If not, then it is best to avoid conflict and exit yourself from this gracefully. There is no need for you to lose your kindness if you are unable to convince others of your ideals. This just means that there is no possible way for you and this other person to accommodate each of your own set of standards in this circumstance.

A study done in Iowa showed that there are people who are not able to adjust their beliefs even if they are faced with valid pieces of evidence that oppose their sentiments. This circles back to how that person is wired and the other values that he prioritizes because of the environment he was raised in.

Comprehending someone else's point of view does not stop with understanding the statements they give. Place yourself in the shoes of others and try to also understand what they feel versus just what they think. Every person has his own way of processing the things he sees and every person's experiences will always be different from yours.

When we speak, we all have our own biases, values, and beliefs that affect the way we conclude and respond. Seeing the world through eyes other than our own will enable us to understand what is important to others, what moves them, and what is non-negotiable to them.

This will take a lot of humility and patience for you to practice. However, the very reason why people are able to improve their lives

through social intelligence is that they recognize that they are not the only people who matter in this world. Everywhere you go, you have to work with people who have their own set of emotions, principles, and values.

Once you see things from their perspective, you can start communicating in ways that appeal to their unique manner of expression and accommodate what is essential to their being. Doing so will make people trust and open up to you more. It breaks down their barriers and it enables them to cooperate with you more because they feel valued and understood.

When you are faced with a person you cannot seem to understand. You must acknowledge that as well. You do not go on and intrude on another person's life and impose things on them especially when you do not have a good understanding of that person's life.

It is never okay to assume that because a person does not speak his mind he completely agrees with everything you say and do. You can only have an idea of what others value and prefer but your understanding will never be enough for you to decide for them.

When a person is so closed off, there is no way for you to completely tell if you are on the same page with him or her. This can be quite difficult, of course. But we again have to go back to how this person is raised and how this person is wired.

You do not necessarily have to dig up a person's past or put them in a box made up of your own limited set of standards and views of the world. All you can do is treat this situation with even more respect and understanding.

For some people, it takes a lot more time and trust for them to open up to other people. And there are also people who are not able to open up completely. These people may place a lot of value on their privacy. They may have had traumatizing experiences in the past. Or maybe they just do not see it as a priority to reveal themselves to you.

That is why you also do not go barging into their lives and require them to open up to you when they are not willing and ready. There are advantages for every person if they are able to communicate what matters to them but this is not something that should be forced. In no way is opening up to you the responsibility of any person. If you want to get to know someone, you have to be patient and you have to allow them to go about this at their own pace.

It is never productive to blame someone for not freely letting you into their lives. This is also a sign that you do not see things from the other person's perspective. You are only taking care of your own needs and requirements.

What you can do is to make a safe zone for them to comfortably and willingly share their inner thoughts and beliefs with you. The more this happens, the more opportunities you get at understanding the other person better.

If this never happens with them, respect that. That person will appreciate it more if you are able to leave them with their preferred devices. This shows that you do not prioritize your needs before others and that you are able to recognize their values too. Who knows, this may even show them that you are worthy of their trust and confidence and they later proceed to share more of themselves with you.

If the person ends up suffering because of their inability to communicate, remember that this is not your lesson to learn. A good person wishes good things for others. If it does not work out for him, practice kindness. If it works out for him, wish him more happiness and success. But never make his actions your responsibility.

Looking at everything from another person's perspective is a humble acknowledgment that you do not know everything and that you do not have the monopoly to automatically know what is right for everyone. Socially intelligent people recognize that in order to participate well in a social

setting, you have to realize that no two people can ever be the same. Work on getting to know people and looking at life from different perspectives.



## RESPECT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

*A*s we have gathered from our previous chapter, we all have our own set of experiences that made us into who we are today. That is the very reason why we all have differences that sometimes clash with each other. Most people learn and acquire skills through their friends, family, and the community around them. Understanding that the way people respond and the customs they practice are greatly affected by their upbringing.

The foundation of our beliefs, values, rituals, and skills was formed based on the culture of the societies we were raised in. Our culture is what guides us in the social system of the community we were born into.

Each culture has its own set of regulations and forms of justice based on their history and needs. This dictates the actions, rituals, and standards we follow to be able to keep harmony within the societies we are living in. Culture also provides us with a framework to follow so that we can better understand others and work well with those who belong to the same community.

When we are placed in a situation where the context of the culture is unfamiliar to us, we feel unequipped and we are unable to navigate as easily as we do with those who share the same cultural practices with us.

This may be the initial reaction you have when put in such a position but a better way of looking at it is to see it as an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge about the world, other cultures, and how your very own culture is perceived by others.

All cultures have their own language, traditions, beliefs, clothing, and laws that organize their society. These things are unique to each culture and are indicative of their accomplishments and history. Some cultures even took thousands of years to be established. The very reason why these cultures were able to survive thousands of years and are passed on from

generation to generation is that society recognizes it exists and accepts it because it is seen essential to keep their societies thriving.

How do you invalidate something that has provided fulfillment and harmony to the lives of many for so long? Well, that is something that the whole world continues to struggle with. And the main reason behind it is that people find it hard to understand that managing interpersonal relations does not require you to invalidate the culture of others. In fact, it is better to accept that each person's culture is valuable and legitimate in his society, his life, and the world we live in.

What we have to do is to overcome the fears we have when we are faced with a culture that is different from ours. We can only do this by first recognizing that there are many cultures that have emerged and thrived around the world.

You yourself have your own culture that you follow. It does not have to be a culture that was formed thousands of years ago. Look at the social devices you use and the rituals, traditions, and habits you follow within your family and the community you grew up in. Every person has a values system that is based on how he was raised and the environment he lives in. This can be considered a form of culture as well.

No culture is more valid than others. Saying that one culture is less valid devalues the people who are living in the society in which that culture comes from. And just the same, no person should also be forced to erase their culture to accommodate another's. This applies to you and anybody else in the world.

Taking his culture away from a person is an injustice that destroys a person's self-worth and self-image. You are taking his sense of identity away from him and showing him that everything he has learned up to this point is of no value and therefore he must adopt a different sense of identity. No one but the person himself has the right to decide what will bring peace and joy in his life.



Once you gain the understanding and the confidence towards facing your own culture and the culture of others, you can begin to open yourself up to the opportunity of learning and accepting other people's cultures.

Having an unconditional and unprejudiced mindset is the first requirement for understanding a culture that is not your own. Exploring and learning about culture will require your full openness, appreciation, and respect for others. You have to recognize that you are dealing with matters that are valuable to a person and the society he belongs to. Societies and the people that belong to them are rooted in their culture and you are rooted in your very own culture too.

Learning about the values, traditions, and beliefs of others is also a way for you to have a deeper understanding of your own culture. By looking at how others manage their lives based on their culture, you are able to parallel and contrast your way of life to that of others. You realize what social traditions, priorities, and rituals you have based on the similarities and differences you find with the other person.

As you get a better understanding of how cultures are formed and what it does for people, you find more reason and purpose in your life and the lives of others too. You realize the meaning and thinking behind the values systems that exist within societies.

With acceptance and understanding, it becomes easier for you to respect diversity. This is very difficult to achieve if you only see things from your perspective.

It also becomes easier to keep an open mind to the intricacies of other cultures once you realize that cultural diversity leads to growth and prosperity.

Tea is a part of Asian culture that was able to thrive and be accepted in European culture as well. Many of the things we enjoy today like chocolates, spices, arts, and design resulted from the effects of cultural exchange and globalization.

When new ideas are accepted without prejudice it can make way for new solutions and opportunities. It also paves the way for new alternatives and sources of knowledge. There is so much to benefit from learning and giving value to diversity and the first step to it is allowing yourself to open your mind to it.

There are several ways for you to familiarize your mind and immerse yourself in learning about the culture of others.

One, participate, and actively listen to conversations with people who have a different culture from yours. Enter the conversations with an open heart and an open mind. Try to find the rationale and the appreciation for the differences you find with them.

Do not actively search for things to disagree with. If something does not sound right to you, try and put yourself in the other person's shoes and see why it matters to them. Do not judge them based on your orientation.

The very reason for your differences with them is the compilation of traditions, values, and experiences they have within the society they came from. Be respectful and understand that although you disagree with them, it is important to them and their culture. Always offer kindness and understanding first.

Two, learn more about the culture of others by collecting information from various sources. Watch the movies they make, listen to their music, and read up about their culture and history. Their history and the stories they tell are good sources of information on how and why their values system was formed.

You can make learning an enjoyable experience. Keep it exciting so that your interest grows as you immerse yourself in this cultural experience. This is also something that you can easily share with others and it can lead to meaningful conversations about cultural diversity that everyone can learn something from.

It is easier more than ever to have access to more material about cultural diversity because of the internet. With the rise of social media, people around the world are able to connect at a faster pace and with more accessibility.

Always remember to practice being sensitive as well. If something is very important to someone's beliefs, do not make fun of it. Some cultures have their own religious practices and it is important to be aware of these things. If you do not understand it, do not make fun of it and speak too freely about it. If you want to have an understanding of their customs and traditions, respectfully ask the right questions and do proper research about it.

If you have gathered information about their beliefs and practices, be sensitive about how you share your learnings with others. This is also a form of respect that you should give to other people. Sharing wrong and misleading information about their culture is unfair and it can lead to more tensions rather than understanding.

Three, travel as much as you can. Studies have shown that people who travel a lot and people who migrate to other countries far from their own tend to be more tolerant and have better-developed communication skills than those that stay close to home.

Traveling and moving to another country forces you to orient yourself more with the culture of others. Being a foreigner also requires you to learn the language, respect customs that are different from yours, follow a system that is new to you, base your actions on their existing framework and social etiquette. All of which will be very beneficial to your social intelligence.

As you get more comfortable in places other than your hometown, you also realize that there is nothing to be scared about when it comes to diversity. You place more meaning and value on your own culture too. Instead of losing your identity, you even strengthen it.

Making the move to explore cultural diversity requires patience, kindness, understanding, and a whole lot of heart and effort. It may seem like a daunting task at first but you just have to remind yourself that you have nothing to lose and a lot to gain in this process.

Your social intelligence grows as you accept and understand the fact that everyone is built in a different way. It is counterproductive to ask others to adjust according to your orientation and standards.

The sooner you realize this, the more time you have for yourself to learn and do better socially. With more time on your hands, the more opportunities for socialization you get and the more chances you have at tweaking the bad habits you want to get rid of. It also allows you to pace yourself better and not get overwhelmed with the many things you can learn from. Remind yourself to appreciate the journey and avoid unnecessary pressures that can lead you to resent this exercise.



## LEARN HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS

Conflict is inevitable in any social setting. As previously discussed, people have varying views, opinions, and feelings about certain things. These differences are bound to create conflicts and misunderstandings.

Social disputes can make or break relationships. But if a conflict is handled respectfully and positively, it can be a way to strengthen bonds and build trust within relationships. You should hone your conflict resolution skills to further improve your social intelligence.

To do this, you must first have a better understanding of how conflicts work.

Some people say they would rather avoid conflicts but what does that do? You can never find someone who thinks and feels exactly the way you do one hundred percent of the time. Conflicts will arise one way or another and when conflicts are not confronted, it does not resolve itself. The emotions you feel might temporarily fade away but since the issue has never been resolved, it comes back up. It only takes another trigger and you are back to those feelings again.

Our differences do not automatically create conflicts. Differences become a problem when a person thinks and feels that his values, desires, motivations, and ideas are compromised in the relationship. Every person has his own set of deep, personal needs that is exclusive to him. The issues may appear trivial to someone else and that is where the problem lies.

Here is an example of conflicting needs:

Toddlers have a yearning to learn and explore. Their curiosity can sometimes lead to unsafe situations like climbing up windows or wandering off somewhere without their parents. However, parents are motivated to protect their kids and they can only do this by setting rules and limitations. These are opposing needs and it eventually leads to conflicts.

When conflicts arise, a person's need to feel safe, valued, and respected and his need for closeness and intimacy are perceived to be threatened. If such concerns are not addressed, it can result in arguments, distance, and breakups in personal relationships. In a working environment, this can result in a decrease in productivity, bad transactions, and lost opportunities.

Successful long-term relationships have to consider the needs of each person. If all parties decide to assess their conflicting needs with respect and compassion, this can pave the way for stronger team relations and creative resolutions.

Because people tend to perceive disagreements as a threat, it needs to be addressed properly so that it does not lead to strong negative emotions. Our life experiences, culture, and values system affect our perceptions of things and the way we react to them.

Managing the emotions that come with these perceptions in times of stress will be difficult if the person has not mastered it yet. It can be impossible to come up with a successful resolution if this was the situation.

For people to address these worries more easily, they should see conflicts as an opportunity for growth more than a battleground. The fear of conflict can skew your perspective of things and take your focus away from problem solving and resolution. Removing this fear is more challenging for people who have been in traumatizing unhealthy relationships and painful experiences from previous disagreements. These people tend to view conflict as a terrifying, demoralizing, or humiliating situation.

Feeling threatened whenever you confront conflicts can be a problem. You will likely respond to conflict by closing off or expressing things with bias and sometimes anger. This is not a healthy way of managing and addressing disagreements. When conflict is confronted in an unhealthy manner, this will lead to disappointment and uncertainty. It can cause resentments, irreparable relationships, and distance.

A healthier approach to a conflict requires respect and understanding.

Choosing to be respectful in conflict resolution will guide a person's words and actions during a confrontation. When you respect the other person, you make the effort to be calm and non-adversarial in your speech and conduct.

Calmness plays an important role in communicating and keeping your conversation organized. Keeping calm during conflict resolution requires patience. It is easy to lose your calm when you become too eager to convey your side of things and while the other person is laying down his thoughts. If you truly respect your peer, you will be patient in this process and not prioritize your own feelings and thoughts because you place value in the other person too.

Being non-adversarial means you participate appropriately in the process, you pay attention to the other person, you practice active listening, and you avoid being defensive. When you respect someone's time, effort, and needs, you make it a point to listen to them properly.

If you do not intend to listen to the other person, the respectful thing to do is to be clear about it and not deceive them into thinking that you are here to have an exchange of thoughts. Do not just pretend to listen.

Unfortunately, if you do not consider the other person's side, there is a good chance that your resolution is incomplete and another conflict will arise eventually.

Now let's talk about being understanding. Understanding someone requires compassion and attention. Compassion is sometimes mistaken for being patronizing and condescending. Being compassionate does not mean you view the other person as someone beneath you. It does not mean that the other person is pitiful or incapable.

Showing compassion means you can recognize the difficulties of the person. When you are compassionate, you accompany that person throughout his difficulties by responding based on the emotions and thoughts that are brought about by his situation.



In conflict resolution, this means that you recognize that this person's needs are also on the line and his participation is based on an effort to try and balance his needs with yours. This allows you to set aside your biases and become more attentive to his needs as well. Being compassionate does not mean you give more priority to the other person's concerns. It only means you consider why this is a challenge for the other person too.

When you are committed to tackling conflicts in a healthy manner, the foundation of your resolution is strong and you can navigate through it more successfully.

It is now time for you to take note of your abilities. The success of your resolution will depend on your abilities.

The ability to manage stress – Stress can affect your perceptions and your communication. Resolving conflicts can be stressful because you are considering not just your issues but also your peers. If you can keep yourself calm and composed under pressure, your communication is clearer and you get to listen and understand the other person more accurately.

The ability to control your emotions – You have to understand your own needs to be able to communicate them with clarity.

If you are aware of your emotions, it is easier for you to pinpoint what exactly it is that is bothering you. You do not go haywire and spew unnecessary and irrelevant issues. Recognize your emotional state and what causes these strong feelings.

This will allow you to control your emotions and focus on what really matters. Do not let your emotions control you. You should be able to communicate your issues without resorting to threats, intimidation, and retaliation.

The ability to listen – Here is where you should be able to practice active listening. It becomes more difficult to practice active listening if you are stressed and if you have a lot of strong feelings about the situation.

However, your understanding of the whole picture relies heavily on how you interpret and understand the other person's side.

The ability to assess differences fairly – Your differences with your peers goes both ways. Remind yourself to see things fairly and to respect the other party's needs. The amount of respect you expect should be equal to the amount of respect you give.

Take note of what level of these abilities you have by looking at your previous experiences with conflict resolution. Assess where you are lacking and what the causes are. The next time you have the need to resolve conflicts again, remind yourself of these abilities and observe whether there are things you find more difficult than others.

## SOME TIPS ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

The first thing to remember about resolving conflicts is that the goal is not to win or be right. The goal is to strengthen and maintain relationships. You are arguing not to argue, you are arguing to settle both you and your peer's issues.

Pace yourself. Resolving conflict takes up time and energy. Prioritize and focus on the present. Sometimes you have multiple issues you want to resolve. When this happens, organize your thoughts and manage your emotions first. Ask yourself if all of them really matter today.

Do not let previous conflicts get entangled with the present. You will only find it more difficult to communicate clearly and assess both you and your peer's issues accurately if you keep bringing up issues that happened in the past. Holding grudges and placing blames will only clutter your mind and put a strain on your emotions.

Pick your battles. Some conflicts are not worth your time and energy to resolve. If you see a stranger's comment on the internet that is against your beliefs, think about how much it matters to you first and if it is worth your time and energy to discuss things with this stranger.

Agree to disagree. Sometimes you just cannot come to an agreement. Recognize when things are going nowhere. Let go and move on. You have to know when to stop and. You do not have to have the last word. Do not let pointless arguments drain you. All it does is make you angry and resentful.

Conflict resolution should be looked at as a case to case basis. No disagreement can be tackled the same way. There is no formula for it. You have to approach it with patience and diligence.

Although there is no formula for conflict resolution, you can equip yourself with the abilities and the framework we discussed in this chapter.

Treat your disagreements with understanding and respect the outcome of your resolution.

If you truly aim to harness your social intelligence, then approach conflict resolutions respectfully and objectively.



## WORK ON INCREASING YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence (EI) is about the ability of a person to recognize, evaluate, and take control of his emotions. It is similar to social intelligence in that it requires you to evaluate and interpret concepts founded on yourself and others. However, emotional intelligence is more focused on being able to empathize and assess things based on emotions.

Studies have led researchers to assign four different levels of EI. These levels are emotional perception, the ability to reason using emotions, the ability to understand emotion, and the ability to manage emotions.

These four aspects of emotional intelligence are arranged by complexities relating to the processes that go hand in hand with them. The more basic levels involve perceiving and expressing emotions and the higher levels require more conscious involvement and regulation.

Emotional perception means you must have the ability to accurately perceive emotions. This involves being able to read into nonverbal language and facial expressions. Through emotional perception, you recognize your feelings and you identify them. You know the differences between being happy, sad, and angry and you attach those labels to certain how they feel.

Next, the ability to reason using emotions means a person is able to use feelings to stimulate thoughts and cognitive activity. The focus of his reactions and what he pays attention can be motivated by emotions. The reason why robots are not considered emotionally intelligent is that all their actions and responses are based on command and logic. Robots will not be able to adjust their responses depending on emotions because they simply do not have feelings.

Third, the ability to understand emotions enables people to assign meanings to emotions. If a person is showing expressions of sadness, the

interpretation is that the person is sad and that there are reasons for his sadness.

For example, you find your spouse crying quietly in the bedroom, this will lead you to think something must have happened that made her upset. It may be because you have said or done something that was offensive to your partner. Maybe your spouse is having some problems at work or with your kids.

Lastly, the highest level of emotional intelligence is being able to manage emotions effectively. It is vital to have the capability to regulate emotions and respond to other people's emotions appropriately. You need to be able to separate your thoughts and feelings.

You do not think you are angry. You feel you are angry. You do not feel that laptops are better than desktop computers. You think that laptops are better than desktop computers.

In emotional intelligence, to be able to feel connotes emotions and to be able to think entails rational thoughts. You have to identify between the two so that you know whether you have to manage your emotions or adjust your thoughts before deciding on an action.

Emotional Intelligence greatly impacts social intelligence because the capabilities associated with it will greatly influence the way you participate in a social setting. Imagine not being able to tell how your friend feels when you are having a conversation with him. If your friend keeps a straight face and a monotone voice the whole time you are with him. That is exactly what it is like when you are not able to identify emotions and emotional responses.

These are some ways emotional intelligence influences social intelligence:

## GREATER SELF-AWARENESS

A key factor in having self-awareness is being able to consider the things that affect emotions. This allows you to understand and manage your own feelings better.

When you are talking to your boss about the workload and the schedule of your deadlines, you start to notice that your boss is becoming antagonized as you speak. You look back on this encounter and you start to realize that you were behaving according to emotions of frustration and fear. As you were explaining to him your situation, you apparently started raising your voice and your face started to show anger. Your words started to sound like you were putting blame on him.

These actions were triggered by strong emotions. If you are not aware of how you speak and how you behave based on the emotions you are having, it can lead to misunderstandings and mishandled conflict resolutions.



## THINKING BEFORE REACTING

Recognizing that emotions are temporary enables emotionally intelligent people to not be overpowered by them. Taking time to regulate your emotions before reacting to a highly emotional situation will enable you to calm down and tackle things rationally and more accurately.

When you are experiencing strong feelings of anger, you resort to actions that are meant to attack or to retaliate. You start placing blame, threatening people, and looking for ways to punish their perceived offenses towards you.

Also, anger tends to take over your perception of things and your ability to express sentiments. When you are angry, you tend to focus on feelings of being attacked and whatever the other person says may sound offensive and inadequate to you.

When you have a strong motivation to express your anger, it also becomes a challenge to be clear about your statements.

For example, you are angry because your significant other forgot about your birthday and a deal you were working hard to close did not push through. This will be a combination of two stressful things that can push you to feel anger.

You start shouting at your significant other and you spew words you do not mean. This transpires and it causes even more stressful consequences.

What you could have done was separate your feelings between the two situations. Once you start managing these feelings, think clearly about what you really want. Anger is temporary and it is an emotion that can come from frustration.

Maybe you just want your significant other to say sorry to you. Maybe you wanted to spend time with that person but it did not happen. Managing your feelings can allow you to express these needs more clearly and when

you are clear about your intentions, the other person finds it easier to address your needs.

## EMPATHIZING WITH OTHERS

Empathizing with how others are feeling is a huge part of emotional intelligence. People who are emotionally intelligent consider the perspectives, emotions, and experiences of others as the basis for other people's actions. This is why it helps to see yourself in the shoes of others to be able to empathize with them.

Looking at things rationally is not always enough especially in a social setting. Being able to consider both reason and emotion is more effective in building strong interpersonal relationships. People operate on different levels and the more aware you are of this, the easier for you to identify the best approach.

This is a common problem in the workplace. People try to be as professional as possible when they are in the office. Their focus is on productivity and efficiency.

Sometimes, people get overwhelmed by the pressures of transactions. People get frustrated, angry, and unappreciated but because they concentrate too much at work, they do not recognize how this has already triggered strong emotions in them.

This creates conflicts that can only be resolved if you tackle it from an emotional standpoint. If a person has feelings of being unfulfilled and underappreciated, maybe all that person needs is a pat on the back.

There are also conflicts that seem like they can be tackled rationally but actually entails an emotional approach as well. For example, someone forgets about emailing a client. That person resolved it and the client was satisfied with the actions taken.

From a rational point of view, the work was done effectively and the client did not mind the mistake. But, the other coworkers involved still feel bad about the issue. What is missing?

First, the person needs to apologize for his mistake. Second, he needs to alleviate the frustrations of his coworkers, as well. To do both, he needs to have an understanding of how emotions work.

Although it appears to be an inborn characteristic, researchers propose that it is possible to learn and hone emotional intelligence.

Harnessing your emotional intelligence also enables you to take criticism objectively, be accountable for your actions, communicate your feelings more clearly, respond, and pay attention to others better. It also allows you to consider all parties during problem-solving and make clear and accurate decisions for yourself.

There are steps you can take to hone your emotional intelligence.

## 1. EMPATHIZE

Understand someone else's point of view by putting yourself in their shoes. Think about how you would feel when placed in the person's situation. When you empathize with others, you understand things from an emotional standpoint. You recognize the nuances of their speech and actions and you are able to assign what types of emotions are influencing their reactions.

Emotions have their patterns as well and once you get to see these patterns, it becomes easier for you to recognize what is happening to a person emotionally.

Some people tend to bite their nails when they are worried. There are people who start talking too much when they are nervous. There are people whose first reaction raise their voices when they are frustrated. These patterns depend from person to person but can be common to others as well. When you are so used to reading through these signals, empathy becomes instinctive to you and the more you practice empathy, the stronger your emotional intelligence will be.

## 2. LISTEN

Pay attention to others and listen sincerely. Take note of their nonverbal cues as well. Body language is difficult to feign so being able to interpret nonverbal language can be helpful in understanding others.

Listening is a very important tool in empathy as well. When you are able to accommodate the viewpoints of another person, you realize how you can empathize with him more easily. You consider different factors that are contributing to that person's emotions.

When he says he is lonely, you can better empathize with this sentiment of his. You start to understand why he keeps trying to look for a company all the time. You realize why he has not been having enough sleep recently. You receive explanations for the emotions and actions you want to understand.

### 3. INTROSPECT

Take a look at how your behavior and reactions are influenced by your emotions. Consider also how the emotions of others affect their responses when placed in the same situation as yours. This requires the ability to reason with your emotions. Understand what roles emotions play in your decision making and behavior as well as others'.

Here are some more questions to guide through introspection:

What effects do your emotions have on your interpretation of events and social interactions?

Are your emotions stable and consistent? How fast do you move on from one emotion to another? Take note of the levels of the emotions you have as well.

Are you able to identify the triggers of your emotions? Do you experience strong emotions when you are by yourself?

Do your emotions manifest physiologically? For example, do you experience stomach aches when you are worried or sad? You can use these as cues to be able to identify your feelings more accurately.

Does your body language match your emotions?

Do your feelings lead to strong expressions that affect you and others? How does it impact others? When you are mad, do you have a tendency to project these feelings on others?

Allowing some time for yourself to assess your emotions can be a learning experience that will greatly affect your perception of life and your ability to foster more meaningful relationships.

If you are having a hard time getting to know yourself in terms of your emotions, try reaching out to friends and family. Read more about it and make a conscious effort to assess yourself.

Having strong emotional intelligence will also enable you to choose interactions wisely. When a person makes you angry or frustrated, find your triggers. If the triggers come from that person's behavior and you find no way to resolve this with him, then he may not be worth your time and energy.

There is such a thing as an emotionally draining relationship. Usually, this involves a person who is considered an emotional vampire. Have you ever had an interaction with someone and you just felt utterly drained after? That person could be an emotional vampire.

Dr. Judith Orloff, MD is an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA who wrote about emotional vampires in her book, *Emotional Freedom: Liberate Yourself from Negative Emotions and Transform Your Life*. An emotional vampire feeds off the emotional energy of other people and there are several types of it.



## THE NARCISSIST

These people place too much self-importance in themselves. They hog attention and are motivated by large doses of admiration. They can be eloquent and intelligent that is why they draw people in.

Indulging someone for their good qualities is not a terrible thing to do. What you have to do is find a way to provide his need for validation as you try to let yourself into the conversation too. If your methods do not work, then exit yourself gracefully.

## THE VICTIM

There are people who always find ways to make themselves look like the victim and think that the world is always against him. They drown in self-pity and they demand to be rescued or excused.

You must recognize that you do not have to be a part of his narrative if it does not really involve you. Do not fool yourself into thinking you can save him. At the end of the day, it is impossible to save someone who is comfortable with being troubled.

## THE CONTROLLER

They tend to be self-righteous and they seem to have an opinion about everything. They try to place judgments and make it seem like they are the authority on what is right and wrong.

When you encounter people like this, assert your needs but know when to stop. It is hard to be effective with people like this. They cannot be managed so you have to agree to disagree and come up with methods that will allow you to avoid interacting with them.

## THE CRITICIZER

Similar to the controller, they see themselves as the authority. However, a criticizer will make you feel ashamed and unqualified. They do this to lift their ego.

Do not take what he says personally and speak up only when needed. Taking things personally will only make you defensive and it will only create a loop. This person has a hunger for validation. Appreciate their useful insight but recognize when you have had enough.

## THE SPLITTER

He is driven by strong emotions. One day he is so good to you and then becomes ruthless to you once he feels offended even at the slightest. He is like a ticking time bomb dressed in gems.

You have to set your boundaries when you are dealing with such a person. Be objective in your actions and do not get sucked into his vortex. Be aware of who you are and refuse to take sides.

It will be easier for you to identify emotional vampires once you polish on your emotional intelligence. Be self-aware and be careful not to become an emotional vampire as well. People will most likely find a way to avoid you if they start to notice that interactions with you are draining them for no good reason too.

Being socially and emotionally intelligent does not mean you have to be okay with everybody. There are people who will strain you emotionally and you have to be aware of this. This will affect the way you perform at work, the way you manage your social energy, and the way you look at relationships.

Emotional and social intelligence can simply give you the tools to understand and manage your social interactions better. You are not required to feed anyone else's ego if it already consumes too much of you. Empathy does not mean you have to rescue people. Empathizing with people only means you are able to see the other person's reasoning as influenced by his emotions.

Be careful with your social endurance. People who have a higher EI tend to get consumed because they easily tap into other people's emotions. Remember that you are still your own person and your issues are separate from others. Do not involve yourself in the problems of others but make

adjustments to the way you conduct your interactions with them as guided by that person's emotional status.



## APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

*A*cquiring social intelligence involves interacting with different people. You make an effort to try and foster relationships but you cannot expect to have the same level of relationship with everyone you interact with. It is important that you are able to invest in deep relationships with people who you find are meaningful to you.

But, how do you find meaning in relationships?

It is easy to look at our interactions with people as mere transactions. You meet a waiter, you order from him, he serves you, you finish your meal, and then you are out the door. The interaction is rooted entirely on the fact that you wanted to eat and the waiter was doing his job. He needed the sale from you and you needed the product from him.

But what if we change a few things in this interaction?

You take your seat, and then he hands you the menu.

You look at his nametag and you tell him, “Good morning, Jeff. How are you today?” as you go through the menu options.

The waiter replies, “Oh, my morning has been great so far, how about you?”

You proceed to have a very brief chat with him and then he hands you your order.

After eating, you tell him you had a great meal, you thank him, and tell him to have a good day.

You do this at least every other day with this person. After a few weeks, you have started feeling a connection with this person. He is not solely the waiter at the cafe anymore. He is now Jeff. He lives a few blocks away from the cafe. He is a part-timer who studies at the nearby college. Once Jeff eventually leaves his job, it will somehow be a significant change in your life and you will have to rewire yourself when someone replaces him.



Jeff now holds some value in your life. It is because you have acknowledged his presence, he was listened to, he was seen, he had a name. And he did the same for you. This is a person that now plays a role in your life. Even if it is a small role, he has still established a more meaningful relationship with you.

It is easy to get so preoccupied with our lives that we end up not acknowledging the people we interact with. We forget to make people matter. The first requirement in social intelligence is that you see people for who they are. This includes their identity, their feelings, and their actions. When we only look at their function in our everyday transactions, it is impossible to have a meaningful relationship with them.

When there is no meaning in the things we do, we are not fulfilled and we end up unhappy. One way to find meaning in life is to feel that you genuinely belong. Psychologists say this is because it satisfies two conditions in someone's life. One is being in a relationship that is based on mutual care. Because of this, you feel you are validated. You are treated like you matter so you feel that you really do matter.

Two, because you are able to enjoy moments of joy and fun consistently with a person. The interaction between the customer and Jeff has brought a sense of belongingness to the both of them because they participate in enjoyable interactions often. This is a way to endear someone to you. That is why when you see a cute toddler, you want both of you to enjoy the presence of each other. You make an effort to endear yourself to the toddler. You make jokes, you act silly, and you find a way to make it fun.

A sense of belongingness is not automatic in relationships. This requires constant effort from both parties. This comes in many forms.

For example, when you are on a long road trip with your friend, the person sitting in the passenger's seat tries his best not to fall asleep. This is an effort he is making because he does not want you to feel alone in the task of driving.

Another example is when you are watching a movie with your significant other, you offer a gesture to acknowledge your significant other. You can initiate holding hands or you try to lean against your partner more. When your partner responds according to the signals you send, you feel validated and the bond grows. You have made a way to share a moment with this person and it was accepted.

If these small gestures are able to fulfill a person's sense of belongingness, it is easy to make a person feel unwanted too.

How does this work? Say you ask the lady at the front desk of your office if they received a package for you. As she hands you the package, she tells you that your kids go to the same daycare. You just looked at her and ignored her remark. You were focused solely on the transaction and you just did not take notice of her effort. This lady is then left feeling rejected. You were not able to make any connection with her because you just saw her as a variable in a transaction.

You would think this only affects the lady. However, psychologists have found that when someone is rejected, the rejecter also alienates himself and will feel insignificant after the encounter. Whenever you pass by the front desk, a part of you may feel this alienation too and you would feel the need to avoid her. This is because the bond that the lady wanted to offer to you has been dismissed.

But it does not have to end there. If you really make an effort to fix things between the two of you, it is possible to have an opportunity for trust-building again. But this time, the offer of trust will have to come from you.

What you can do for the lady is to start an interaction with her once more. This time, you offer kindness. You start greeting her with a smile whenever you arrive at the office. You call her by her name and thank her when you enlist her help. But do not forget to confirm that, yes, your kids

go to the same daycare. It does not have to be a grand gesture but it has to be consistent and sincere.

It is not guaranteed that we can have the same exchanges in all the interactions we participate in. But being aware of how this works enables us to choose to reciprocate and understand others when we feel rejected. Since there is a consciousness about how we make others feel and how we all benefit from the process, it is now easier for you to take the necessary steps in building more meaningful relationships.

To further guide you in the journey of choosing the people you value in your life, here are a few things you can base your views on to help you appreciate people more.

## 1. EVERYONE IS DOING THE BEST THEY CAN

People will always try to do things with the best intentions. No person wants to mess things up in their life. Whether it be their lifestyle or their relationships. We all have different resources for the tools we use in tackling our problems. It can be our upbringing, our traumas, our fears, etc. We rely on our orientation when we decide on the actions we take.

Recognize that the way a person acts is what is right to them and is not meant to disappoint anybody. This is their best. They can improve and make better choices in the future but for now, this is what they can do with the resources that they have.

Sometimes, what you are seeing from someone is the state that they are in and not their character as a person. People go through different things in life and these can sometimes make an impact on their performance.

Here is a situation for you. So you are working on a project with a colleague and he is cranky and he was just not doing well in this task with you. It is easy to get frustrated in a situation like this. But what if you try to figure out what is going on with him first?

You talk to the guy and tell him your concerns kindly. He tells you his daughter is in the hospital and it has been affecting him. Stress can take a toll on a person in a variety of ways. Maybe he was not sleeping well, maybe he has been having physiological issues because of this. There is a lot that can go on when a person is in a difficult situation.

When you find out about this, you try to console him and you tell him to take a breather.

The very next day, your partner comes to work and tells you his daughter has recovered. You see the relief in his face and his whole demeanor has changed. He performed so much better and he made a lot of progress in your project.

Your decision to trust that maybe this person was just in a difficult state turned out right. You could have gotten angry and it might have turned out differently. You could have added more tension in the situation and do irreparable damage to your relationship.

What happened to your workmate can happen to every person. Try to have a little faith in more people and you might see them shine the next day.

## 2. DIFFERENT PEOPLE, DIFFERENT STANDARDS

Your standards are not the same as everybody else's. When you are too rigid with what you think is right, it can be frustrating to you if another person does not share the same viewpoints as you. People can have different methods and perspectives on things and what works for you might not work for others. If you again look at the actions of others and have faith that they are doing the best they can, then your standards should not apply to them.

By being too fixated on your idea of the right way of doing things, you do not get to see the good in other people's ways. You fail to learn and you fail to show appreciation to those who deserve it.

This is not to say that you should not give advice or suggestions. You can always try to compromise. What you should not do is to invalidate the work of others based on the standards you set.

If your approach is to distrust a person and assume things ahead of their actions, you only lose a bet against yourself. You are putting tension where there is none.

The simplest version of this is when people pronounce things differently. You correct someone and you get annoyed whenever they get it wrong. And then you travel to a place where everybody says it the way that person does. Wouldn't you feel embarrassed by this?

Do not lose the chance to see good in people. You are only disappointing yourself.

### 3. Maturity Comes at Different Paces

Maturity comes in different forms and at different paces. Have you ever met a person and taken them to be quite immature?

People can mature in life, career, and relationships. The lessons we get in life depend on the experiences we take. Today, people start making their

families at a later age compared to those from the earlier generations. They used to marry in their 20s while today, people prefer to get married in their late 30s or 40s.

Our values take us to our preferred journeys. If you prioritize your career, then you build your career first. If you value relationships, it is easier for you to prioritize loved ones over your career.

If the career woman meets a man who wants to build a family soon, they will surely have conflicting needs. The man can say the woman is not mature enough for him. And the woman can say the same thing about him, too. But the truth is, their maturities are at different places.

If you only see maturity in the form you prefer and the time you set, you will be disappointed in a lot of people. But if you try and see what a person looks for in life and see how they place value on things, then maybe you can get to know them for who they truly are.

When you find people you appreciate and who have become important to your life, do things to acknowledge them. Every person wants to feel accepted and seen by the people they value too.

By showing your appreciation to those who do things you admire, you draw them closer to you and you motivate them to keep doing things they are good at. Not many people will admit it or maybe they are not aware of it, but receiving compliments and thank yous make people feel worthy and fulfilled.

Showing appreciation does not always need to be a grand gesture. Sometimes preparing to make impressive gestures is what takes us away from making the actual move. Remember that this is about the person you appreciate. It is counterproductive to put your ego in showing someone you admire them.

Here are simple ways to show people you appreciate them:

1. Call them by their name. When you call people by their name, it makes people feel acknowledged. Instead of just saying “Hey”, including the person’s name makes a lot of difference.
2. When you are going out of the office to get coffee. Ask a coworker if he wants you to get one for him too. It is a simple way of saying you see them working hard and it is okay for you to do something to take some burden off their day.
3. If someone is absent, tell them you missed him at the office and hope he is okay. If there is extra work that needs to be done, don’t make an issue out of it. When your coworker gets back after the small gesture you made, he may even work harder.
4. Respect the space you share with others. Do not leave your mess in the spaces that other people use.
5. Always remember to return anything you borrowed and say thank you. Do not inconvenience the lender by waiting for him to check up on you and do not give him the idea that you do not care about his gesture of lending you his item.
6. Everybody makes mistakes. Show people you trust them to make things right. This can be encouraging to people and they will indeed do their best to make up.
7. Celebrate occasions and milestones. Make people see that you care about them and that you are happy for them when they make achievements. Birthdays, promotions, graduations, etc. These are events when you should acknowledge people.
8. Say thank you to someone who gives you an update or a heads up. Say thank you to any favor or gesture a person does for you. Let them know you appreciate their efforts.
9. Give positive feedback. Tough love should be balanced with good feedback. How do they know when they are doing right?



And people put in more effort when they see that others are happy with their work.

10. Give gifts. A piece of chocolate is a gift, a cup of coffee is a gift, a compliment is a gift, a message is a gift. Do something for others to make them feel you appreciate them. Not only on special occasions.
11. Make eye contact when someone is speaking and when you are talking to somebody. It shows that you are focusing your attention on them and their presence and attention are valued.
12. When someone is speaking, get off your phone. Pay attention.
13. Keep your word. If you can't, apologize and give them a heads up. Do not suddenly disappear.
14. Show people you care enough to show up. Show up when invited, show up in meetings, show up on special occasions.
15. Respect other people's time. Try your best not to come in late.
16. Treat others as you want to be treated.
17. When someone is feeling down, a friend, a coworker, or a family member, be there for them. A simple call, a simple message, or even just keeping them company is enough.
18. When they are happy, cherish that moment with them as well. Do not ignore the emotions of those who are important to you. That is when you get to know them more and you learn how to interact with them better.
19. The power of touch. Shake people's hands, give a pat on the back, hug your loved ones. This offers an emotional, physical, and spiritual connection to people you appreciate.
20. Tell people you love that you love them.

Those things may seem small but they matter. Know the value of people in your life and acknowledge them. Build and maintain relationships that

are meaningful not just for you but for the other person as well. Practice these things and you will slowly feel the difference in the way you view relationships and the way you socially interact with people.



## FORWARD THINKING AND WILLING TO LET GO OF THE PAST

Now that you have a better view of relationships and you are more aware of your emotional intelligence. There is something you have to learn about relationships as well. Some things just cannot work out.

When this happens, people tend to hold on to the past and regret previous actions. They spend so much time dwelling on the things that did not work out. Learning when and how to let go is a part of social intelligence.

It is not easy to let go of the past. This includes the trauma, bad habits, disillusionment, unhealthy relationships, and toxic people we have encountered before. But did you hear all of that was mentioned? They are all negative experiences.

According to neuroscience, negative and positive information is processed by the brain differently. Since people tend to think about negative experiences in more detail, our brains remember these events better.

We cannot change how our brain processes information but you can train yourself to feed your mind with healthier thoughts.

One way to do this is by cutting off the emotional connection we have with these negative experiences. It is hard to accept when we make mistakes and when we get hurt by other people. We feel weakened by these thoughts and we feel ashamed.

Here are more reasons to move forward and not get stuck in the past:

## YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST

There is nothing you can do at this point to take back the words and actions you regret from yours. Punishing yourself with negative emotions will not change your previous actions. What you can change, however, is your present and future circumstances. Take responsibility by making better choices. If you regret an action, then do not make the same mistake again.

## MAKE WAY FOR BETTER THINGS

When you fill your life with fear and regret, you have no more space for new experiences that will give you the opportunity to have a better life. Stop holding on to the things that fill your life with hopelessness so that good things will come to you.

## YOU IMPROVE YOURSELF

In order to let go of the past, you have to stop making the same decisions. You have to let go of bad habits, toxic people, old frustrations, and other things that keep you from moving on. You have to make an effort to get out of your comfort zone. Yes, your negative experiences are now considered your comfort zone. They become excuses to keep yourself from deciding on a new life. It holds you back from challenging yourself with new goals and building new relationships. Give yourself the chance to find happiness.

## EXPERIENCE FREEDOM

Yes, there were snippets of happiness in your previous experiences. However, you were hurt and you have made some mistakes too. It does not erase the happy parts but it just cannot happen without the bad parts. Do not carry the heavy load of your past for the small pieces of happy memories. Free yourself up with the baggage of your past mistakes. Take out the weight one by one so that you can freely move forward.

See how far you have come

You have come so far and your past has given you life lessons that made you a better person today. Embrace who you are now. Nobody is perfect. We have all made mistakes in the past and that made us stronger individuals today. Forgive yourself and see what else the world has to offer. Put all your heart and energy into your aspirations to make your life happier.

Stop losing yourself to your mistakes. Nothing is permanent in this world and that includes the pain and troubles of your bad decisions in the past. Do not let them turn into self-destructing behaviors.

Rumination can take over our lives when we focus on our negative experiences. But If the past cannot be changed, why do you continue to live it? Worry and fear can take over you and influence your actions in the present. Although our past has led us to who we are today, it does not define our future actions and circumstances. Take control of your future and your life.

So, how do you take yourself out of this loop?



## 1. BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR PAST

Our negative experiences of the past may have caused us pain and suffering. It is easier to point fingers and find things to blame outside of ourselves. We cannot live with the shame that comes along with our bad decisions. But that is the reason why you keep denying it. You are aware that you have mistakes but you keep finding excuses to justify your wrong actions.

It is hard to trick the mind. If you try to convince yourself of a more ideal version of the past so that you can avoid feeling embarrassed and ashamed, you will not learn how to adjust and better yourself.

Find peace within yourself. Nothing lasts forever and everything can change. If things did not go as you intended them to be, then learn from them. Let go of your failed expectations and build yourself anew.

## 2. LEARN TO FORGIVE YOURSELF

Being accountable for your mistakes does not mean you shouldn't forgive yourself. In fact, it is an important step to take. When you forgive yourself, you tell yourself that you have done wrong and that you should do better.

Find a way for you to get to a better place. Enjoy your new journey so that your past does not go to waste. Move forward and honor your past by honoring your present. Appreciate what you have now.

### 3. DO NOT RELY ON THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS

When we think about the other people that played a role in the past, we feel embarrassed and it destroys our self-esteem. Do not get eaten up by this. Their opinion of you has nothing to do with your future actions. If you feel bad that you hurt people, then avoid making the same hurtful actions.

You cannot control what people think of you so just focus on yourself. If it was other people that hurt you in the past, then feel better that you are out of that situation now. Stop letting them continue the pain they have caused you. They are no longer in control of your emotions.

Stop relying on their opinion of you. What is important is that you have made the decision to make your life better. Remind yourself that you must remain authentic to yourself and that you are the only one who can set expectations for yourself.

#### 4. YOU ARE NOT DEFINED BY YOUR STRUGGLES

Your struggles can sometimes act like a vortex. When it becomes overwhelming, it sucks you in and you get trapped. You should not let your problems become your identity. They played a part in forging the person you are today but they do not define your character.

You will not lose yourself if you let go of your past. Everyone does their best with what they have and so do you. As long as you keep your focus on your new life, your decisions will keep getting better and better over time. And that is what defines you and the life you want to live. Mistakes are mistakes. Leave them at that and leave them to the past.

If you keep thinking, I did this and that in the past. Well, yes. And that is why you are taking the steps you are taking now. Letting go of the past does not mean you are being inauthentic to yourself. You are actually being more true to yourself by admitting that you are no longer happy with that phase in your life. You can now move forward now.

## 5. REGAIN CONTROL OF YOUR MIND

Our attachments are often the root of the problem. Letting go of your past does not mean it only brought you bad things. That is also not a good way of looking at it. Things did not live to your expectations fully and that was it. You cannot say, “I can’t let go of the good memories so I will hold on to everything”. Read that again. These things are separate.

When something ends, your suffering is caused by your inability to accept that it has ended. If you think holding on to a toxic relationship is how you can keep the good memories going then prepare yourself to keep the negative experiences going as well. Stop holding on to your expectations.

When you are unable to appreciate the present, you keep going back to the past. Be thankful that you had happy moments in the past. But stop losing your present to the past.

Socially intelligent people take the learnings from their past failures and apply them to their actions in the present and in the future. We live our lives day by day and we have a chance at new beginnings every day.

It is better to take action so that we can make new decisions that will give us a more meaningful future. We must look forward and let go of our fears and hesitations because there is a lot more to explore. Find your truth and be fair to the people you meet now and the people you will meet in the future. Show them your true self.



## CONTINUALLY LEARNING AND GROWING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

**E**motional and Social Intelligence are lifelong learning endeavors. You must constantly evolve and grow. You have to always be open to new ideas and you must be willing to learn from others. The world continues to change and it is a sign that we as a people are thriving.

While learning from others and having high emotional intelligence is essential to self-development, it can also take your independence away from you. Because you want to keep growing and you want to learn as much as you can, when someone presents an idea that seems like a better fit it makes you think twice about the progress you are making. This in turn can be detrimental to your journey towards self-development.

You must strive to be independent if you want to get the best out of your learning journey. An independent person ultimately trusts himself and his own judgment to make the right decisions for himself. This may seem like an obvious thing to do but most people don't even notice when they have become dependent outside of themselves. Each time you let others influence your decisions for yourself, you have actually started to share the power you have for yourself. While this can be a good thing sometimes, relying on things like this will make it difficult for you to keep your independence.

There are several ways a person could be losing his independence.

You should not allow the opinion of others to be the basis for your self-worth. The decisions you make for your life should come from your authentic self. Your aspirations, your needs, and the relationships you form should be dictated by your own values and beliefs.

Because they are your own, only you can fully understand the decisions you make. Other people will have their own perspective of what's wrong or

right but those standards cannot always apply to you. When you let others shape your beliefs and decisions, you slowly lose sight of who you are.

If you always give in to people because you feel guilty, you may have lost your independence to them.

Not being able to attend parties because you want to rest for tomorrow's work is perfectly okay. Not picking up a friend's call because you want some time for yourself is still okay. Saying no to expensive trips because you are paying for bills is definitely okay.

Do not make decisions just because you can't disappoint someone. Go to the party because you want to see people. Pick up the call because you want to have a chat with your friend. Go on that expensive trip because you have earned it. Only make those decisions if you are truly comfortable with them.

If you are friends with everybody, think about the reasons why you are friends with all of those people. Having friends is good for many reasons. One of the goals of honing social intelligence is being able to form strong relationships with others. However, it is also a sign of having great social intelligence if you know that there are people you keep close, there are people you just know, and there are people you stay away from.

Take a look at who your friends are and why they are in your life. Do not get pressured into entertaining everybody that enters your life. Set boundaries for yourself. You can have many people in your life and still be lonely inside.

Take care of the meaningful relationships you have. Always be kind. But stay away from people who take the life out of you. Do not base your happiness on the number of people around you. Find your own happiness first so you can share it with those who are dear to you.

Holding a grudge is a sign of being reliant on something that has disappointed you. It seems like an odd thing to say but people who hold on



to the thought of things that made them upset are not able to let go of the expectations they had that others have failed them with.

Imagine how much time and mental energy you are giving up because of your disappointment with something that did not work out. Instead of wasting your precious energy on rumination, find another channel for your happiness and fulfillment.

Giving up your goals and dreams because you were rejected is being dependent on the approval of others. When people decide to not work with you or when they do not believe in your potential, they base it on their own set of standards. Not yours and not for the whole world. You should not give up your dreams based on that. If you are changing your goals, it must be because you really want to and you have better goals you want to tend to.

Instead of giving up, find another door to knock on or pursue getting better and then go and get another chance at it.

In line with what we just discussed in number 5, proving someone wrong should not be something you think about. When you get rejected or when you get bad remarks from someone else, you do not go and do things for the sake of proving them wrong. Doing this shows that you are dependent on the idea of others about you.

What for? Remember to do things for your life's fulfillment and your authentic self.

When you talk about others a lot, you show how much power they have over your life. Why spend time and energy discussing people who annoy you and play no role in your life's goals? Do not let thinking and talking about people who don't matter take your focus out of the things you want to do in life.

Blaming other people for your bad decisions will only make you lose control of your choices in life. When you make decisions for yourself, you make them because you have your own values system that you follow.

Pointing fingers just sound like an excuse if you claim others took the best out of you. If you are dealing with a toxic person, recognize that they don't fit in your life. Do not dread the "mistake" you made with them. Take control of your situation and make the right choices for yourself.

Giving too much credence to people will only set you on a confusing path. Keep yourself at the helm and go off in the direction that your true self has chosen for you.

If you seem to have grown dependent on others, there's no need to worry. It happens to the best of us. You have to know that it is never too late to regain control of your life. You need to make the conscious effort to be able to think, feel, and act in a way that is helpful to your life's journey.

Some people are scared of the idea that if they do not go out seeking the approval of others that they are becoming too selfish. Says who? But anyway, you can think about it this way, you are doing this because you want to offer people your true best. You want to be the happiest and the most fulfilled you can be that is authentic to you and that will be authentic to them.

Set yourself out on the path of independence so that you can be genuine to everyone you welcome into your life.

Here are some additional thoughts on claiming autonomy in your life.

## 1. KNOW YOURSELF BETTER

You always start with this. This time, your reason for getting to know yourself is because you might not know what you are capable of, yet. Many people who rely on the ideas of others do so because they lack trust in themselves. Do things that will increase your self-esteem and self-worth so that you can have faith that your decisions are right for you.

If you end up making mistakes, you do not make others responsible for them and you adjust yourself because you want to do better. The only way to find your strengths and weaknesses is by taking risks. It is okay to find guidance from others but make sure they resonate with your truth.

When you operate your life this way, you regret nothing and you find fulfillment sooner.

## 2. CHALLENGE YOUR DOUBTS AND BELIEFS

Our lives are continually evolving. Sometimes the things that were valid to us before are no longer true at a certain point in our lives. Always stop and check if you still want the same things before you make a decision. We all grow and we all change. See to it that you are not choosing things out of habit.

If your priorities and your beliefs can change, confront your doubts as well. Seek the truths in the life you live in and never let your doubts rule your life.

### 3. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

If you take responsibility for your needs, no one needs to take over for you and you truly spend time with people for who they are more than what you need from them. When people are in a codependent relationship, they become good at meeting each others' needs. The problem comes when they forget to be good at getting their individual needs.

While it is great to have someone who can be truly selfless and who is there for you when you need them, it is wrong to fully rely on them. Take note of your own needs and find ways to meet them.

#### 4. ASSERT YOURSELF

Set healthy boundaries and communicate your needs well. Assertiveness is not equal to arrogance. You can be assertive and respectful at the same time. Just the same as you respect others, you must respect yourself too.

Your ideas and your beliefs matter and can be helpful to others too. If you can assert yourself while being respectful to others, you can offer your full self to those who matter.

We are responsible for our own growth and happiness. Other people can be instrumental to our self-discovery but we are still in control of the path we take.



## BE RELENTLESSLY POSITIVE

There are positive people and then there are negative people. People are drawn to those with a positive worldview in general. People see you in a negative light when you have a negative outlook. Who wants to work with someone who is demotivating and critical all the time?

If your talent is to make everything look worse than what it is, it will be difficult for you to understand yourself and others. Why? Because you actively search for the negative things. Effective leaders share positivity.

Research shows that pessimistic people are actually more at risk of having heart disease. And people who have a more positive outlook perform better at work. Positivity shows a lot of benefits but many people have a hard time adopting a positive mindset.

It was mentioned earlier that when you think about negative things your brain goes into hyperfocus and it will retain the negativity once they are processed. Have you ever noticed that when you start thinking about something bad it gets worse and worse in your head?

One reason why it becomes harder for some people to be positive is that they misconstrue positivity for happiness or being jolly. They think happiness is a prerequisite to positivity. That is why some people say, “You cannot expect positivity from me because I am very sad/angry about my situation”. Yes, it is more difficult to be optimistic when you are sad or angry. But this is because you ruminate when you accommodate negative thoughts.

Positivity and emotions are not in the same category of things. When you are positive, you search for solutions, you look forward to good results, and you aim for happiness. The goal of being positive can be a variety of things. Happiness can both be a goal and effect of being positive but it is not a prerequisite.



It also becomes difficult if you think about positivity as some sort of a bet or wishful thinking. It makes it look like an imaginary and impractical outlook on life. However, positive thinking is actually a method. You are not merely taking a chance or putting things at risk. Positivity is a method and there are steps to it.

Positivity is also not something you are either born with or without. Staying positive is intentional and it requires constant effort. You have to change your perspective and begin to think positively. There are methods to it that you can practice.

Here are some techniques you can try:

## 1. EXERCISE REGULARLY, EAT, AND SLEEP WELL.

People often take these things for granted but it is probably the most practical way to become positive. Fact is, when your body is in top shape, it is easier for you to think positively.

When you are hungry, your body releases hormones that make you angry and stressed. This is why “hangry” is a thing. Exercising is also a type of meditation and it can keep your mind away from rumination. Lack of sleep also messes up with your mindset and stress levels.

When your body is also in top shape, you feel more in control of your life and your self-esteem is higher. This helps keep your stress levels lower.

## 2. START YOUR DAY RIGHT

When you start your day right, it creates a domino effect and everything follows.

Sleep is also a main factor here. If you have enough sleep, you wake up feeling recharged and ready to take on your day.

Try to set a good sleeping schedule as well so that you avoid rushing yourself to work. Getting stressed because of the rush might set the tone of your day to a bad one. Getting late also makes you feel like you are not in control and you go back to having negative thoughts.

### 3. DON'T RUSH

Whenever you rush things, you become a bit more reckless and it can create a lot of stress.

Always try to plan things with a good schedule so that your mind can concentrate on actual work versus the pressure of being rushed.

If you are already in the moment of rushing things, try to take bits of breathers so that you can refocus between tasks.

#### 4. CULTIVATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

Choose the people you spend time with. It is hard to become positive when you are with toxic people. It is the same thing with the things you read, watch, and listen to.

Follow sites that produce healthy content that you can learn from. Watch films that offer you a better outlook in life. Listen to music that can help your mind focus.

## 5. BE GRATEFUL

Think about the things you are grateful for and say thank you to those who bring positive experiences to your life. Say thank you even for the little things. It does not sound like much but actually saying those two words can be powerful enough to remind you of the good things in your life.

## 6. IT CAN BE DONE

When your mind goes into this whirlwind of hopelessness, stop. Say it in your mind and stop everything that you are doing.

After that, breathe and refocus. You will not get the solution right away but instead of telling yourself that it is impossible, ask yourself how it can be done. Then, work your way towards finding a solution.

## 7. ARE YOUR FEARS REAL?

Our brain is really smart and it can even trick us. When we ruminate, it has a great way of convincing us that our fears are real when they actually aren't. Most of the negative thoughts you have are products of how your brain processed an initial fear.

It is a trap. Think about the fears you had before. How many of them became true?

Ask yourself what is the worst that can happen from this and then what can you do about it?

To get ahead in life you have no choice but to get out of your comfort zone. Believe in yourself. You have come this far.



## 8. HELP SOMEONE OUT

If you can't seem to be positive for yourself, try to bring positivity to someone else. When you do things for other people, it brings a sense of pride and hope for yourself. When you make someone happy and you help them out in a situation, it brings lightness to your life and it creates a positive trend in your mind.

## 9. DON'T TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY

Sometimes getting feedback can be taken negatively. Don't. Criticism cannot be avoided because we are humans and we all have different ways of tackling things. If it is unavoidable, there is no point in fearing it.

Keep yourself calm and listen to the feedback. Take what is useful and do not take it personally. Plus, not all feedback is about you. Remind yourself that people have differing standards.

## 10. IMPROVE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-AWARENESS

We always go back to this because social intelligence is about understanding yourself and others. If you know yourself well, you cannot be fazed by anything that is out of what you stand for.

Always go back to your goals in life and your own journey as a person and see what actions you can take to achieve them. Sometimes daydreaming helps to remind you of your goals. Take some time off and then think about the things that you want for yourself.

Will those things be affected by your current problems? Ten years down the road, will these things still matter?

## 11. BE MINDFUL

Make an effort to see little things that make your day better. It may seem hard when you are in a bad situation but think simply.

Take a little walk and explore. I came up with a method I have for myself. I call this funneling. When my mind is filled with things to do, difficult tasks, fears, etc., I go into haywire. So what I do is I find an easy activity like walking or playing simple puzzles.

My mind is distracted enough but it does not stop me from thinking about my tasks. What happens is there is much less space for my brain to entertain more negativity. My small activities act as a funnel so that I can streamline my thoughts.

Sometimes distractions can be too overwhelming and you end up escaping from your tasks. That is not the goal of this exercise. When you procrastinate it only piles up the anxieties you had to begin with.

Find small things that take a little bit of space in your mind and then try it out.

This works for me and it may or may not work for you. The point is, you have to release yourself from negativity because it never creates anything good in your life.

When you make the conscious effort to change your perspective on things, a lot of other things will follow. You find better ways of handling toxic work relations. You find it easier to deal with hectic schedules.

Positivity should also not be looked at as an expectation. When you are drifting away from that positive feeling, do not get pressured into bringing yourself to the “ideal” level again. Breathe. Start somewhere, start small, and then inch your way out of negativity.



LOOK FOR WAYS TO MAKE LIFE MORE FUN, HAPPY,  
AND INTERESTING

When you look for opportunities to find happiness and fulfillment with others, you tend to achieve it for yourself more easily. Whether it is in the workplace, at home, or with friends, you can receive pleasure and satisfaction from seeing others happy and fulfilled.

Spreading a culture of having fun and making things interesting helps everybody including yourself. When there is no fun in the things you do, they become pointless and monotonous. Soon enough you will start to resent things.

People do things because they want a better life. You work because you want financial stability. you work harder because you aim for fulfillment. You get into a romantic relationship because you want to have joy with the person you love.

No one will ever be motivated if you offer them a difficult and miserable life. If you are a person who knows yourself well and is confident enough to face life head-on, you enjoy seeing others achieve their goals. There is no point in wanting people to suffer.

When you make people happy, they want to do more and they become more loyal to you. They want to thrive with you because you let them enjoy life more. And that is what fulfillment is all about. Everyone thrives and everyone achieves something while doing things that make them feel more like themselves.

And because you allow them to achieve their goals with you, they trust you and they trust themselves more. When a person is surrounded by trust and positivity, they become more confident and they take more risks. Taking risks leads to more opportunities and progress for everybody.

When you are in a relationship with a significant other or your family members, celebrate their achievements with them. Allow and encourage

them to confidently take on a project or go for that dream job. You do not go into a relationship to see someone trapped in insecurity and hesitation. Let them love themselves more and love them for who they are.

In the office, you should still celebrate achievements. If someone does well, it will be good for the company so everybody wins. Aspire for greatness without pulling anyone down. Be grateful for the opportunity you have in the company you are in and let the company thrive so you can fly high as well.

Seeing others achieve things for themselves will not take opportunities away from you. You are responsible for your own success. Do not ever think you deserve something more than others. You do not know what other people put up with and the hard work that they do. Just the same, you are the only one who knows what effort you put into your work. So understand that you all go through different paths in life and offer a little more kindness. People tend to pay kindness forward so more and more people will thrive.

Fun does not always mean you have to do silly things and laugh all the time. Fun comes from different things for different people. The only thing that is common with fun is the enjoyment that comes with it. And when you make an effort for someone to enjoy things with you, they feel valued and acknowledged.

To create fun, you have to get to know people. You have to spend time with them and pay attention to what moves them. When you understand someone, it becomes easier for you to create moments of fun with them.

Some people find fun in food and conversations. Others like to do physical activities like sports. There are people who find relaxing activities fun. It all depends on the person you want to spend time with. And don't worry, sometimes just showing someone that you want to enjoy things with them is enough to make someone feel valued. Do not feel too bad if you think you didn't do well.

If you are having trouble thinking of ways to bring fun to your life and other people's lives, there are some ways you can remind yourself of fun times.



## CREATE A DAYDREAM JOURNAL

Write down the things you enjoy. From something as simple as popping your fingers to something as big as buying a new care. When you write things down, imagine being able to experience those things you wrote down. As you imagine yourself in those situations, find out which ones give you the most natural fun reactions. Some of them will make you smile, some of them will make you feel silly. Take the emotions you had from this exercise and realize the things that are fun to you.

## GO BACK TO YOUR CHILDHOOD

Children tend to be more carefree with the way they have fun and enjoy things. That is why research suggests that our preferences on the things we find fun in are formed when we were just kids. Daydreaming every once in a while about your childhood fun will remind you of the things you like and how pure, innocent fun feels like.

One more thing that people should pursue is to live a life that is interesting to them. Every person should work hard for their dreams and goals but no one should forget about keeping things interesting. When you do things that take the monotony out of your work, the task becomes more exciting and you want to keep going.

It is the same thing with relationships. If you treat relationships like a transaction where people just act according to their functions, it becomes forgettable and it can create a lot of resentments between people. Sooner or later, people will just want to move on because they no longer feel a sense of joy in what they are doing. Remember the goals you set in your relationships. If you want to be with someone because you want to be happy with them, then do not take time for granted.

When I was a kid, my dad wanted me and my brother to catalog all our books and arrange them on the shelves. We had tons of books and my brother and I wanted to skip the whole thing. We were dreading having to work on it because it was just boring and it will take a lot of time.

When the time came for us to work on it, my dad brought out a cooler of drinks and a bag of snacks with him. We suddenly felt excited about the task and we wanted to do more. After we were done arranging the books, my brother and I wanted another task to work on.

My dad always tried to make boring tasks interesting to us. I have enjoyed chores growing up because of him. It did not feel like a bribe if that

is what it seemed to you. My dad knew what we liked and he wanted us to enjoy. We would have done it anyway even without the surprise because we had no choice. We were his kids after all. But my dad knew he had to make it interesting for us so that we can learn a better way of working.

I brought that lesson with me ever since. There is nothing to lose when you make work more interesting. It just makes things lighter and more enjoyable. And because I had that positive experience, I try to bring that culture everywhere I go.

There is a lot of happiness and fulfillment in seeing others enjoy and do well. Only people who have a good understanding of who they are and who are able to manage the way they think and feel can truly be satisfied when others are at a good place in their life.

If one person has not been able to fulfill his life goals yet, it should not matter if other people are able to achieve theirs sooner. In fact, there is hope in seeing others succeed. You can learn from them and you can be braver at taking risks yourself.

You define the life you want to live and you design the mind you want to have. Surround yourself with happiness and positivity and you can slowly see yourself experiencing those very things for yourself too.

Social intelligence is not just about yourself and the things you want to achieve. It involves the people around you. When you try to understand the people around you more, you get better at managing relationships with them. As a result, you will be surrounded by happy people who are able to spread happiness as well. This changes the culture in your organization, in your community, in your family, and within your friendships.



## CONCLUSION

Throughout the book, it has been a recurring task to get to know yourself better. This is because everything starts with you. To understand people, you have to have a better sense of yourself first. Identify the good, the bad, and the ugly in you.

When you know where your identity starts and where it ends, you no longer get confused when people start to have opinions about you. Take note of your social liabilities and continue to practice being real.

Once you open yourself up to other people, prepare to have your values and beliefs challenged. We are all human and we were raised in many different ways. Our culture and the values system of the societies we come from can have a deeply rooted influence on us.

That is why when we confront our differences with other people, we must strive to be respectful and understanding of the things we say and do. The only way to resolve conflict is if we open ourselves to the idea that we all have needs and it is our own responsibility to communicate them well so that we can all be understood.

You are now equipped with the steps to take to be able to practice effective communication. You must put them to good use because one of the biggest challenges of the world today is filling up the gaps between the differences in our cultures.

As much as we would like to be heard and paid attention to, our peers also have the same amount of needs as we do. Pay attention to them and listen with intent.

In that case, we must practice patience and kindness and set our energies to resolution and maintaining relationships rather than in winning. What is the point of winning if you lose valuable people to things that will not even matter in the grand scheme of things? What we must win at is

being able to resolve our conflicts with others. That we are able to meet the needs of one another through effective and respectful discussions.

The key towards having meaningful relationships is when we make a conscious effort to recognize a person's value and acknowledge them for this. There is no way for you to foster worthwhile connections if you fail to appreciate people.

If you are able to accept other people for who they are and not for their troubles, then give the same kindness to yourself too. Do not punish yourself by continuing to live in the past because of the embarrassment and regrets your previous mistakes have given you.

Allow yourself to grow and feel your social intelligence kicking in. There is nowhere else to go but forward.

You are not defined by your past. Nor are you defined by the opinions of others about you. Regain control of your life by realizing that what matters is the actions you will take for your present and for your future. You have to take yourself out of the vicious cycle because it is more worthwhile to focus on your development as a person. Create space for the new learning you will receive.

If there are people to keep, there are also people to keep away from.

Remember to keep yourself aware of people who will consume you out of your energy. It is part of your emotional and social intelligence to protect you from people who are disrespecting you. Exit yourself gracefully from such relationships and focus on other things that resonate more with your genuine self.

When you find people who you value in your life, share with them your happiness and enjoy things with them. What is the point of relationships if you do not live a happy life with each other? Make it your goal to be positive and then happy.

Every person wants to do well in life and find a way for them to have the happiness they long for. Continue to practice kindness especially to

those who are still in their dark place. If you once been in a dark place, then you will understand what kindness can do to a person who is struggling.

You can only say you are content and fulfilled with your own life if you are able to celebrate the achievements of other people sincerely.

Be positive that you can do many things on your own and that you are the master of your life. Social intelligence is not about getting ahead of people. It is about understanding people and how you can be able to live a more meaningful and rewarding life through the relationships you foster with them. Use your learnings to spread more positivity and support others so that we can all thrive.





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# HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

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CULTIVATE DEEP RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE TO  
IMPROVE YOUR PEOPLE SKILLS

*You can make more friends in two months by becoming really interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you. Which is just another way of saying that the way to make a friend is to be one.*

*Dale Carnegie*





## INTRODUCTION

You must have heard the cliché "No one is an island," which reiterates the value and importance of human relationships. Regardless of how self-sufficient you may be, cultivating the right relationships with people is crucial because it is how a connected world thrives.

Sadly too many people struggle with the development and sustenance of good relationships. For example, some people don't know how to cultivate a personal relationship with their colleagues, aside from having a working relationship. Some others have issues with people skills and seek ways to stabilize their relationships with others.

There are multiple layers to these issues, and with this book, we will unravel solutions to these challenges. Through the chapters and section below, I will help you unearth ideas you can execute that boost your people skills. I will show you practical ways to use communicative skills and other resources to maintain a connection with people.

Over the years, I have devoted my life to helping people become the best versions of themselves, and I have done this through various platforms. As a professor, motivational speaker, and author armed with two degrees in psychology and neuroscience, I will be sharing my wealth of knowledge and experience with you, which will help you cultivate deeper relationships.

My background in behavioral sciences and developmental psychology, combined with my dedication to helping people, inspired this material. Having been married to my adoring wife for twenty years and as a family man who has raised amazing sons, I will share my experiences while also leveraging other experts' ideas on the subject matter.

As an individual who has enjoyed healthy relationships outside my family, I am committed to showing you to maximize the value of people in your world.

I want to think about this book like you would a road trip, have you ever been on a road trip? If you have, you will agree that if you are excited about the journey, everything you see while on the road will intrigue you. Yes, that's the word "Intrigue." This book will cause you to become fascinated with the idea of being a people's person such that you will no longer feel awkward when intentionally cultivating relationships.

So on this trip, you will learn how to become happy with yourself because it is only a happy person who is positively-minded that can radiate such expressions to others. If you used to think you are unlikeable, get ready to learn how to be a highly likable person who is also charismatic. These keywords: happiness, likeability, and charisma are essential traits you must develop to attain greater heights with your relationship with others.

But our journey doesn't stop with those three words because this is an extensive and comprehensive manual useful in attaining greater heights with relationships in all spheres of life. Maybe you've got a great relationship with your spouse but struggle with your extended family members. It is possible that you are a great friend to others but cannot connect with your colleagues.

Whatever your peculiar relationship challenge may be, please understand that there is an answer in this book for that issue. You may think at this point, "Why does John Ward sound so confident, and how can he proffer solutions to my peculiar inter-personal challenges?"

The answer lies in the fact that I have dedicated myself to this subject matter for years, and it has been a privilege helping people find solutions. With this realization, I have used the myriad of cases solved to interpret the value you will get from this book. As such, even if your relationship challenge is distinctively peculiar, you will find answers.

With my guidance, we will embark on this trip together, and before seeking out relationships with others, we will start by unraveling the kind of relationship you have with yourself. If you can get things with yourself and

if you can make progress with how you relate with YOU, then you will achieve a lot with others.

However, I must offer some counsel at this point, which will help you get the best out of this experience (journey). Firstly, you must understand that life is fleeting; you don't have forever to get things right with your relationships. I wish we could manipulate or control time, but we can't, which means we have a tiny window of opportunity to cultivate healthy relationships with others.

This realization means that you must read, understand, and implement all you discover right now using this book as a guide. Secondly, we are not talking about a vague or passive concept: we will be dealing with people; thus, I cannot overemphasize the importance of taking immediate action. If this was a recipe book, you could decide to prepare the special meals at a special occasion such as Christmas or Birthdays. But this is a book about life, people, relationships, and experiences: we do not have the luxury to wait for a "Special moment."

I urge you to take the first and best step right now towards learning all you can about cultivating deep Relationships with people to improve your people skills.

Alright we are about to embark on the journey, are you ready for transformative change in all aspects of your relationships with others? I hear your loud YES!! Let us begin with a foundational and fundamental chapter on being happy with yourself. You cannot give what you don't have; we will ensure that you get it right yourself first (building positivity) before teaching you to develop such empowering relationships with other people.



## BE HAPPY WITH YOURSELF

This chapter is a foundational one that expresses a fundamental idea on the nature of relationships. Have you ever visited a construction site? You probably observed that a lot of time and attention was given to the building's foundation if you have. This focus on the foundation is because its stability and depth will determine the edifice's longevity.

If the building's foundation isn't reliable enough, someday the structure will collapse and damage lives and properties. But if the foundation is secure and robust, it will stand the test of time. We are also trying to lay a good foundation with this book with this chapter focusing on you.

In this first chapter, you will unravel the importance of being a happy person and how this idea relates to the relationship you have with other people. The chapter also presents tips and ideas on how you can become intentionally delighted, even if you are in the most challenging situations.

If you have a peaceful mind, you will have a quiet life, and this means that if you have an experience filled with joy and happiness, you will offer such pleasantness to the people around you. We cannot talk about the concept of cultivating relationships without focusing on how you feel.

A sad and unhappy person doesn't have a good relationship with himself, so how can we expect such a person to exhibit the same quality? The relationships you will enjoy on the outside will fail if you don't have unconditional love for yourself.

Now think about this: if you had to choose who you will spend the most time with, who will it be? Would you settle for someone who is a downer or someone who expresses happiness and joy? Everyone will be quick to pick the joyful person, and the question is, are you that joyful person?

Please understand that you are not different from how you feel about yourself: if you love yourself and are positive about your experiences, you

will be happy. But if you smear all your adventures with negativity expressed in sadness, you will be unhappy. Positive emotions play a crucial role in rediscovering the love we have for ourselves, which will also become an extension of our love for others.

We will talk about the importance of spending time with others in a subsequent chapter, but the question is, are you happy spending time with yourself? If you must enjoy the benefits of excellent people skills, you must work on yourself such that you cannot tolerate other people you try to avoid.

Before we get to the practical section of this chapter (where you will find the steps to execute), let's take an introspective look into our lives by answering this question: are you happy? Now I know society has trained people to quickly say "Yes," asked this question hence the reason even when someone is hurting, and they are asked, "How are you?" they say, "I'm fine" without expressing the pain.

Please drop those societal expectations at this point because we can make progress with this idea, and on this journey, we must speak the truth. Are you happy? If all you have right now is taken away from you, would you still be a happy person? Do you feel excited about your life when you are alone, or do you wait until someone comes in to make you happy?

Are you happy with life, or do you feel happiness only because you have what you need? These are crucial questions to ask because we need to ensure that we are in the right mental state before talking about reaching out to others. Think about these questions before continuing with the book.

Have you answered the questions now? What were your answers? Do you feel calm within your heart, or are you troubled by life's challenges? If you are happy, you have succeeded in attaining a great height in life, and if you are not, don't worry. You will learn how to reactivate the joy in your life.

More so, if you are happy, continue reading because there are ideas you can implement to maintain that state and even do better with it. Happiness is not about smiling for the world to see while you are hurting on the inside, and you hide your pain because you want to present a "Pretty" picture.

Happiness in life is a conscious expression of the positivity and peace and peace we experience inwardly. When you are happy, you become so excited about life that you want to reach out to others and share that feeling. When you are genuinely excited, people can feel it radiating around you, which causes them to come close to you because you are a shining light.

From the definitions of happiness I have provided thus far, did you observe that I didn't say anything about money? I didn't say anything about your wealth, family, babies, cars, and other material things that society expresses as reasons for happiness. I didn't mention all of that because true happiness is not about what you have or don't have: it is about who you are, and that is the most powerful tool you can use in building healthy relationships with other people.

Some people may gravitate towards you for what you have, but if we are talking about long-lasting relationships that will stand the test of time, the people you connect with will come to you for who you are. Thus the concept of being happy, content, and positive about life is essential in our discourse.

Some people who struggle to maintain relationships are unhappy, and until they fix that glitch, they will continue in that challenge. Such persons desire a secure connection with others, but their negative disposition becomes a significant turn-off when people come around them. When someone is unhappy, they find to smile heartily; they take things too seriously and can be very critical of others.

The attributes described above are not positive traits; when someone starts to exhibit these characteristics, it can make them feel distant. Imagine



if you've got a colleague who never says anything positive to you even when everyone else congratulates you on a job well done.

Imagine if that colleague always makes you feel like you are not enough and makes you doubt your abilities. Would you want to develop a relationship (outside of the work environment) with him/her? The obvious answer is no, and this explanation is why you must work on yourself first and develop a positive relationship with yourself before others.

Maybe the unhappy colleague doesn't even know that he/she is mean because sometimes sadness can be subconsciously expressed. It is also possible that this person doesn't understand how he feels and how he relates to others. But a person only shows the depth of his/her inward emotions, so if you are happy, you will surely be a pleasant companion who easily cultivates human relationships.

Great! So now you know why we are building our foundation on the concept of happiness, you have also examined yourself to discover if you are happy or not. You also gained insight into what pleasure means and how it relates to the relationships you build. We will move on now to learn how you can develop a happy disposition so it can help you strike a beautiful connection with others. Let's learn!

### **To become HAPPY you've got to LIVE JOYFULLY**

The first step to finding happiness for yourself and living a joyful life lies in practicing self-love. If you don't love yourself, you would not be happy with your life: this is the simplest way to express this idea. Fall in love with yourself so much that even before others love, you are already content with the love you feel for yourself.

Unhappiness stems from the realization that we are not enough and that there is nothing special about us enough to cause us to love what we have. So we start looking for validation in others, and when we don't find it, frustration sets in.

Don't wait until someone says "I love you" before loving yourself because there is so much to love in your life, you haven't seen it because you are not paying attention to the beauty in your life. Most interestingly is the fact that the more love you have for yourself, the more love you will have for others.

Everything you express to someone else is usually a result of what you communicate to yourself. If you are going to have loving and amazing relationships, you must be love personified. If you have never said it before to yourself, say it now: I LOVE ME!

Some people cannot express joy and be happy because they always remind themselves of what they didn't get right in the past and how they failed at something. They end up making those past failures their present reality, and this robs them off their joy. We all have stories of past mistakes and failures, but that doesn't mean we will fail to move on from those moments.

If you don't move on, you will never be happy, and if you don't forgive yourself, you cannot forgive others. Remember that you are trying to develop better relationships with others, and forgiveness is a constant attribute when relating to others.

How will you forgive others when you cannot forgive yourself? How will you be happy with someone who hurts you? Forgiveness like other attributes discussed thus far is also a process you have to go through: but the most important idea here is to get started. When you do something you are not proud of instead of beating yourself over it (which is unhelpful), understand why it happened. After gaining understanding of the situation, learn the lesson (there is always a lesson) and forgive yourself.

## CELEBRATING YOUR WINS ENABLES POSITIVITY!

You will experience so much joy and excitement in your life when you constantly celebrate your wins! Now by “Wins” here I am not solely referring to the big achievements that make you feel like you are walking on water. I am also referring to those seemingly small victories you overlook like how you have been punctual at work for an entire month after being a perpetual late employee or employer.

You should celebrate staying off unhealthy food after a health scare and how you overcame a terrible addiction. While these are just examples I believe you get the picture: celebrate your wins, big and small. You will feel a sense of accomplishment that makes you proud of yourself and happy with your progress.

Everything you do that makes you happy can be utilized to enhance your relationship with others. As much as we are talking about you we are also referring to how all of these will strengthen your relationships.

Do you know that celebrating others when they win makes them feel loved? If they feel loved by you they will want to stay closer to you because everyone wants that feeling. How will you know how to celebrate them when you don't even celebrate yourself?

I know you may have heard some people say you should put others first and there is a place for that. But within this discourse you have to put your emotions first if you are going to be very happy. In fact you cannot be emotionally available for the people you bond with if you are not in touch with how you feel.

Your emotions have to be at the fore all the time and you can do this by checking in on yourself. We find it so easy to check up on our parents, friends, kids and everyone else but fail; to do the same with ourselves and this why some people are unhappy.

If you haven't been intentional with checking on yourself now is a good time to start the process. When you make this a habit it will help you know how you are feeling at certain times. When you know how you feel; you can handle what's wrong (if you're sad) and enhance what's right (if you're happy).

Putting your emotions first and listening to how you feel will also help you become a better listener to others (everyone loves a good listener).

Happiness becomes a constant experience when you always have positive expectations. Even in times when it seems like things may not go as you envision hold on to your positive expectation and let that feeling feel your heart with joy.

Additionally you should have positive reactions to the things that happen to and around you. I know it may seem like it is an "Easier said than done" idea but I never said it will happen overnight. You've got to work on it by becoming intentional with how you respond to situations.

I also had to practice this idea for a long time and since then my life has been one filled with constant joy and guess what? Having positive expectations and responses also helped me relate with others the same way such that I see the good in people.

The relationships I have with people have become stronger and healthier because they know that I only see the good in them. How will you forgive others when you cannot forgive yourself?

How will you be happy with someone who hurts you? Forgiveness, like other attributes discussed thus far, is also a process you have to go through: but the most important idea here is to get started. When you do something you are not proud of instead of beating yourself over it (which is unhelpful), understand why it happened. After following the situation, learn the lesson (there is always a lesson), and forgive yourself.

You will experience so much joy and excitement in your life when you continuously celebrate your wins! Now by "Wins," here I am not solely

referring to the significant achievements that make you feel like you are walking on water. I am also referring to those seemingly small victories you overlook, like how you have been punctual at work for an entire month after being a perpetual late employee or employer.

It would help if you celebrated staying off unhealthy food after a health scare and how you overcame a terrible addiction. While these are just examples, I believe you get the picture: celebrate your wins, big and small. You will feel the achievements that make you proud of yourself and happy with your progress.

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Do you know that celebrating others when they win makes them feel loved? If they feel loved by you, they will want to stay closer to you because everyone wants it. How will you know how to celebrate them when you don't even celebrate yourself?

I know you may have heard some people say you should put others first, and there is a place for that. But within this discourse, you have to put your emotions first if you will be pleased. You cannot be emotionally available for the people you bond with if you are not in touch with how you feel.

Be conscious of your emotions, and you can do this by checking in on yourself. We find it so easy to check up on our parents, friends, kids, and everyone else but fail; to do the same with ourselves, some people are unhappy.

Please, if you haven't been intentional with checking on yourself, now is an excellent time to start the process. When you make this a habit, it will help you know how you feel at certain times. When you understand how you think, you can handle what's wrong (if you're sad) and enhance what's right (if you're happy).

Putting your emotions first and listening to how you feel will also help you become a better listener to others (everyone loves a good listener).

Have positive expectations and reactions

Happiness becomes a consistent experience when you always have positive expectations. Even in times when it seems like things may not go as you envision, hold on to your positive hope and let that feeling fill your heart with joy.

Additionally, it would help if you had positive reactions to the things that happen to you. I know it may seem like it is an "Easier said than done" idea, but I never said it would happen overnight. You've got to work on it by becoming intentional with how you respond to situations.

I also had to practice this idea for a long time, and since then, my life has been one filled with constant joy, and guess what? Having positive expectations and responses also helped me relate with others the same way that I see the good in people.

The relationships I have with people have become stronger and healthier because they know that I only see the good in them. This realization means that I have succeeded in achieving two things: I am a happy person and have happier relationships.

To live a happy life, you must learn how to separate what happens in a day from your life's reality. Some people have bad days, and suddenly it feels like their life is a joke. So they use that terrible experience as the standard to measure their growth.

For example, the fact that you lost a job opportunity doesn't mean you have lost everything in life, but if you don't think like this, you will be unhappy. You will be so miserable that even when someone else tries to cheer you up, you feel like they don't understand what you are going through.

But that is just one opportunity out of the several that will come your way! Why do you measure your success in life based on that experience?

Why are you so unhappy because of a failed relationship? Why does the missed appointment on Monday make you lash out at yourself in anger? Come on!

What happens to us shouldn't define how happy we should be. Get over the events of that day and forge ahead with joy in your spirit because you know that it is just a bad day and not a bad life. Your life is still remarkable regardless of what happened, and you need this positive mindset to help others.

You will be a happier person when you are your first support system. Sometimes unhappiness creeps into our lives when we have so much unrealistic expectations of other people that when they fail to measure up we become sad, discouraged, and angry.

So when your friend doesn't show 100% support for you as you would do for her, you suddenly feel sad, which ruins your day. If you are your first support system, whatever anyone does to support, you will only be a bonus.

Learn to be your first cheerleader, emotional support system, and friend. This idea is particularly fundamental when discussing building relationships because a person who wants to connect with others has to be mentally healthy. When you cultivate relationships with other people you will be dealing with their issues as well, how can you manage it all when you haven't been able to support yourself?

If you try to be there for other people without being psychologically prepared, you will feel overwhelmed by their emotions, which can lead to an outburst of sadness. If you are your first support system, you will find joy in being able to comfort yourself in challenging periods (this is the kind of strength you will need to be there for others).

Some people are experts at taking care of other people because they are convinced that the best way to improve their relationships with others is by focusing exclusively on them. As such, they forget to take care nor invest in

themselves. But first, you've got to invest in your happiness as when you have that in abundance, you can share it with others.

Have you ever heard the statement, "Pouring from an empty cup?" It means giving so much of what you don't even have. You cannot continue to show up for people more than you show up for yourself: doing this means you are not investing enough in yourself.

If you continue to give little or no attention to yourself, you will eventually feel emotionally drained, unhappy, and resent those you give your time. Take some time off for "Me time" without feeling guilty: you will come back stronger and in a much happier place to do more for them.

Impatience with self is one reason why some people are unhappy and, if left unchecked, will transfer that feeling to the people around them and become impatient with them. An employee may think a boss is eager because of the goals the company seeks to achieve, but if the boss is also unhappy, then maybe that impatience stems from his issues.

I know you are goal-driven and want so much, but life is a process, and until it is time for the next chapter, you have to be patient with your current state. When you are patient with yourself, you will become mindful of the moment and live joyfully in the present, which also helps you appreciate the efforts others make. Impatience steals people's joy by making them feel like they are not making progress such that even when others commend you on your achievements, you still feel like you are not enough.

That feeling of inadequacy will drain every positive and exciting expression you should showcase. Don't worry, you will achieve all you want, but first, you must be happy and happy you have to be patient with yourself.



## BE GRATEFUL

Lastly, to become a happy person who is excited about connecting with others, you must practice gratitude. Be grateful for your life and all you've experienced in life (good or bad) because being thankful for the good times is easy.

But the bad times taught you some of the most valuable lessons about life as such you should be grateful for them. Learn to say thank you even when nothing good has happened in your life because gratitude is the most potent inducer of joy. A thankful heart is a merry and cheerful one, and when you practice this idea intentionally, you will observe that so many good things are happening in your life. You probably didn't know that you had that much good going on for yourself because you were never conscious or thankful.

When you practice gratitude, you become excited about the good things that are going to happen to you, and this gives a sense of positive anticipation. In this cheerful state, you will love people, and people will love to connect with you.

We just succeeded in building a firm foundation for our discourse! Isn't it amazing that you started out knowing the basic idea of the subject matter, and here you are having a more detailed plan about building relationships? You have done well with your commitment thus far, but this is only the beginning, as there are so many other ideas we will explore together.

Now you know how to love yourself enough to be happy with your life because that is the first step towards building relationships. In addition to being comfortable with yourself, you also have to consider your level of likeability. Are you a likable person? Is it easy for people to relate to you? Don't bother trying to answer the questions: we will explore these considerations and more in chapter two.



## BE HIGHLY LIKABLE

From talking about happiness and building a solid foundation, we will move on to becoming a highly friendly person. In this chapter, you will unearth why you should work towards likeability and how it affects your relationships. You will also learn some of the traits of a likable and unlikable person and develop these trait for a healthy relationships.

Let's participate in another introspective activity here now, shall we? Do you think you are a likable person? Do you agree that it is easy to get people on your team and influence them based on your perspective?

If your answers to the questions are in the affirmative, then it means you are a likable person, and if it is not, again, you will find answers here. The quality of being likable relates to how authentic or genuine people find us. A friendly person is not necessarily a perfect person: this is a person who shows us their true selves and is congruent with their words and actions.

You must have that kind of person in your life: people you feel drawn to and those you can't explain why you like them. According to psychologist Carl Rogers, self-actualization relates to how people show their real selves, compared to how they show their ideal self. The authentic self is who they are, and the ideal self is who they will like to be, but to be likable, you have to show your real personality.

People feel effortlessly connected to real people who are not trying to be anything else other than what they are (there is something so admirable about being real). So even before we get to the main aspects of the chapter, you should know that it is possible to be a likable person you have to be a real one.

But why is this idea of likeability so important? The concept is crucial to our discourse because we deal with how to cultivate relationships with other people. Why try to get close to people when they don't like you?

Just a caveat at this point: the fact that we are talking about likeability doesn't mean everyone **MUST** like you! It also doesn't mean you should become obsessed with the ideas of being loved by all such that when people don't like you, you become sad. We are trying to work on ourselves for the relationships we want to build, and if some people still do not respond to us positively, it doesn't mean we would stop. Remember, you are doing all of these for you and no one else.

Now back to the discussion: being likable will make it easier for you to connect with other people, especially if you have struggled with this idea in the past. When you are friendly, you don't have to spend so much time trying to "prove" that you are an authentic individual because people can see it.

Likeability is also an idea you consciously develop just as you would do with the other concepts shared in this book. While you don't have to be obsessed with the plan, you have to commit to the process by being conscious of your behavior. Are you a pleasant person? Do you admire your personality, or do you think you can do better?

When dealing with likeability, you must ask yourself about **you** first before others and be truthful with your self-assessment. You can work on some areas of your life: we all have those areas, so don't worry about it, but if you remain untruthful because you are not comfortable with what you see, you will not help yourself get better.

With likeability, there is also the temptation to please everyone, and this is wrong. Yes, we want to create authentic relationships with people, but we don't want to lose ourselves. As such, you have to know who you are and then juxtapose that image with the right way of doing things. Use that analysis to judge if you need to make corrections or not.

For example, if you analyze your leadership style and feel like you are fair and strict (because you need to get people to comply), you are okay. But when your followers try to make you change when you know you are

right, there's a problem. Don't give in to the pressure on you to change so you can become "Likeable" because that is not what likeability means.

Being likable means being comfortable with your real self, enough that other people see it and appreciate it. It doesn't mean you should live your life for them and try to suit their image or idea about you. If you can be real, honest, and authentic to yourself, you can develop and sustain healthy relationships.

Some traits describe highly likable people and characters that represent highly unlikeable people. I will share some ideas to help you understand the importance of being real and knowing where to draw the line between likeability and the desire to be what others want.

When a person is attractive, you will see how others treat him/her with respect, because people are drawn to authenticity. Friendly people do not try hard to assert themselves, so people respect them, especially if they are in leadership positions.

Their followers respect them because of how genuine and aligned they are with their words and actions. Respect is also an offshoot of being likable because other people look up to such persons.

Another trait of highly likable people is the fact that their ideal and authentic selves are intimately connected. Such persons know who they are and know their ideal selves: both ideas are closely related because they are trustworthy.

It's not easy liking someone whose ideal and real self are two different ends of a spectrum. Likable people are comfortable in their true selves while working towards a more refined version of that true self. Due to this realization, they don't have to aspire to be something that can never be and instead work on getting better while accepting and celebrating who they are now.

You will know someone is likable when others go to them for their opinions or advice. Friendly people may not be "Experts" in certain areas.

Still, people like to get information from those they want because there is an element of influence within this kind of relationship.

If I like someone and the person gives me advice, I will most likely take his/her opinion over the one provided by someone I don't like. So with this realization, it is safe to say that likable people are also influential: as they can encourage people to take a specific pathway.

When a likable person steps into a room with people like them (sometimes even a room with strangers), they light up the place. Do you know why this happens? It happens because of their charisma (we will talk about this in detail in chapter three). Here is an example to buttress this point: if you like a superstar singer who has been vulnerable enough to share his/her challenges with anxiety, you will feel his/her presence if you are in the same room with the person.

That "presence" you feel is because you like the person, and you can relate with him/her because of the previously shared information about his/her struggles.

More so likable people have an excellent grasp on people skills as they know how to make other people feel at ease with them. Even if they are high-ranking people, you will feel them come down to your level and enjoy an open conversation with you (you will learn how to become like this in another section in this chapter).

Likable people are also very patient with others, and this is one of the most amazing traits about them that makes people love them. Unlike unlikeable people who are always excessively critical, likable people are patient enough to allow other people to express themselves. People love to be seen and heard when someone gives them a listening ear or shows interest in what they do; they like the person for such an instant connection.

Highly unlikeable people can't get people to listen to them because they also do not listen to others. Always remember that relationships are a give and take process where you can only expect what you give to others.

How can I like someone who doesn't listen to me? How can I listen to someone I don't like? This idea is most prevalent in schools (the relationship between teachers and students). If students (pupils of any age) do not like a teacher, they will not enjoy his/her class nor listen to him/her.

This realization means that the teacher will not be as influential as he/she should be because there is already a breakdown of affection between both parties, grounded in likeability.

Unlikable people always pretend to be something they're not because they are not true to themselves; their personality is unstable. The reality here is that people notice these discrepancies and how they relate to such persons. Consistency of character is essential and required to be likable: it is the only way you can that is the only way you can show that you are real.

Unlikeable people are still left out when they are with a group of people because of their ingenuity. Their inability to stay consistent with their character makes it harder for them to remain present. If there is someone you don't like, you will agree that sometimes there is something "Off" about them.

Well, that thing you can only describe as being "Off" is their inability to blend into the group because they are not great with people skills.

Unlikeable people are never conscious of their flaws because they are not aware of their character's inconsistencies. So while the likable ones are working on themselves to get better (this is why people like them) don't make any effort. As such, they stay the same way without making much personality progress, which also hinders the development of a smooth relationship with other people.

You now know some of the traits and ideas that trail likable and unlikeable people, but how can you develop a friendly personality? Being attractive is a skill that must be developed, and as mentioned earlier, this chapter provides ideas and steps you can maximize to develop these skills.

This sub-section is the practical part of this chapter, and it will inspire you to intentionally work on your likeability for a productive relationship with yourself and others.



## BE EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE FOR OTHERS

To be likable, you must be emotionally available to other people. In chapter one, you learned how to work on your emotions, so you are in a great emotional space, which means you can be emotionally available to others.

Being emotionally available means that you are physically present and mentally and emotionally present when people need you. Some people go through challenging experiences and seek someone to share their challenges, but they don't only explore a physical connection. They want something emotional as well, which is similar to being empathic (you put yourself in their position) to feel what they feel.

In that state, when you feel what they feel, you can offer them the best comfort because you understand their situation. This emotional availability act can make people feel drawn to you and appreciate your efforts, thus making you likable.

## INTEGRITY IS STILL A BIG DEAL

In previous times integrity was a big deal in character development, and today it is the same. A man or woman of integrity will always be likable, so in all, you do be a person of integrity. Say what you mean: do what you say you will do and maintain an excellent character.

People will not only relate with you based on what you say; they will also watch what you do because both your words and actions must be in alignment. Some people are unlikable because they say all kinds of things and even make promises but fail to keep those promises and act on their words.

Over time, they become untrustworthy because their words mean nothing to them and people. If you become such a person, not only will you become unlikeable, you will also struggle with the relationships you've cultivated. No one wants to interact or get close to someone who never says what he/she means, which is a trait of unlikeable people.

You can also become a likable person when you gain mastery over the conversations you have with other people. Have you engaged in conversation with someone else who wasn't contributing to the discourse? You probably kept looking at your wristwatch, wondering, "When will this be over?" Afterward, you try not to converse with the individual again.

A lack of mastery over conversations could be because the person is not prepared for such discussions or doesn't know how to hold a conversation. Regardless of what the reason may be, I urge you to become assertive when discussing with others.

Remember why you are learning about ideas such as likeability: it is because you want to cultivate better relationships; as such, you have to ensure that your conversations with people are interesting, engaging, and memorable. Avoid providing partial responses and single answers: ask

questions, answer questions, and show that the conversation interests you (annoying people are unlikable).

People are drawn to those who make them feel confident and appreciated. Aside from this idea, helping you become likable is also a specific life skill that enables you to build amazing relationships. We are all dealing with personal issues, so when someone comes along and tells us, "Well done, you are doing a good job, I appreciate your efforts," it brightens our countenance.

Then when the person says these positively-uplifting words repeatedly on several occasions, we feel like we couldn't like them more than we do. Be that person! Be that wife who commends her husband's efforts at being a great dad to the kids.

Be the husband who says thank you to his wife for her dedication to keeping the family together. These are acts of kindness we show towards others that boost their confidence and make them feel excited about doing more.

If you are the boss at the office, you can become a likable leader who has excellent relationships with subordinates when you commend their efforts. Unlikeable people only complain about what is wrong and what people are not getting right. Likable people see the good, embrace it, criticize constructively, and boost the confidence of others. Who would you rather be? I think you have an answer already!

Have you ever met someone once and always remembered something like them so that you wanted to meet them again? Maybe it was how they smile at you or how they shook your hand and remembered your name? Even if you don't meet such a person again, you like him/her because of that memorable experience.

Just as that person made you feel that way, you can make someone else feel the same by having a memorable personality. You don't have to do

many things to create a significant or lasting impression; you have to be present with someone.

By being present, I mean pay attention to every detail; the person will share with you and pay attention to where you are at that time. Then use all of this information to make the person feel seen, heard, and appreciated.

Remember people's birthday, show up for their events and celebrate with them, hug someone who is hurting and smile at the stranger across the train seat from you. You can do little and big things to stay memorable, but the focus is not on the magnitude in the act itself that leaves a lasting impression.

To be a likable person, you've got to dominate your social space by being confident in social settings. Don't shy away from leading and contributing to discussions as this helps you become assertive. If you find yourself with a group of people and everyone seems to have an opinion share your opinion even if it is peculiar to you.

Some people may say, "But I'm shy" because being socially confident doesn't mean you should become a talkative or overly express yourself. Being socially confident means being aware of your presence when with other people, being confident in your position, and trusting your voice (even if it's a shy voice).

People will instantly gravitate towards someone who is respectfully bold and self-assured because a person reflects what we all want to be (bold and confident). The next time you are with friends, professional colleagues, at a PTA meeting or anywhere else, be conscious of the power of your voice and use it. If you have an opinion, share it, and you will be amazed at the number of people who find that likable.

## DO NOT CONFORM TO THE WORLD'S STANDARD

Lastly, you must avoid the pressure to conform if you are going to become a likable person. People are under pressure today to become something they are not because of the influence of social media. Some of these people forget that most social media portrayals are edited ideas of what people are not.

In this digital crisis and the impersonation going on, people appreciate those who are faithful to themselves, even if it is an unpopular thing to do. You will be liked and respected for being real and consistent with your values after all that is your superpower because there is no one else like you in the world.

If you want to be likable and enjoy the thrill that comes with being able to connect authentically with other people, you must resist the urge to conform to society's standards. Work on yourself because you want to and not because someone dropped nasty comments on your photo on Instagram. Likable people do not give in under pressure, and that is what makes them stand out.

Look at you making so much progress on this journey! You are a fantastic reader, and with this chapter, you are ready to get into another level of discovery on the subject matter. You just unraveled information on how you can become a likable person because it is a basic idea when considering the concept of cultivating relationships.

From learning how to be happy to likeability, we can move on to the third concept, which is an exciting idea that borders on charisma. Have you ever described someone as being charismatic? Have you been described as being charismatic?

What does it mean to be charismatic, and how does it relate to our relationships with others? The next chapter has more answers than

questions with guidance on the subject, enjoy the read!



## BE CHARISMATIC

Charisma is the attribute of being able to influence or attract those around you, and it is straightforward to identify charismatic people. If you are going to thrive in your relationships with others and develop better connections with them, you have to be charismatic. In this chapter, we will explore aspects of charisma related to how you can gain people skills.

Charisma is also a combination of two key concepts: influence and affability. Influence is the ability a person has to inspire others to take specific, actionable steps: for example, from your childhood days, your parents would have been the most influential people in your life. Affability is the quality of being approachable and pleasant: charismatic people are friendly, approachable (regardless of their high status in life), and polite when interacting with others.

More so charismatic people exude both warmth and competence such that they are excellent with the things they do without being "Stuck-up," rude, or arrogant. People look for charisma in their leaders, and this is why when a leader fails to connect with those he heads with compassion, kindness, and firmness, they say he is uncharismatic.

With all we have discussed thus far about charisma, I believe you now understand the crucial role it plays in developing relationships. People love to engage with charismatic individuals because of their warmth when they are with such persons.

This realization is why when you meet a charismatic person; you want to strike a connection with him/her immediately because you want to spend as much time together. But charisma is not an attribute people are born with (as opposed to popular opinion). Saying people are born charismatic is like saying they are born with other amazing attributes, and this implies that some people who are not born with it will never attain it.



I'm afraid I have to disagree with the notion that people are born charismatic because any skill we need to become better at relationships is built and intentionally developed. If a person wants to be kinder, friendlier, and pleasant, he/she has to work towards it intentionally. The same idea relates to charisma: anyone can become charismatic and work towards it.

Additionally, charisma is not a trait reserved only for leaders or some group of people. If you feel like you are not charismatic enough, then maybe you should pay close attention to this chapter as it will teach you how to achieve the goal.

When some people talk about charisma, they like to focus on the person who exudes the trait (which is great but there is more to it); a charismatic person is not just confident in his/her communication and connection with others. He/she also helps others become confident. This ability to make people feel satisfied and assured is one of the most surprising aspects of charisma.

I want to elaborate on this idea a little bit more because it is crucial to what we are trying to achieve with this book. One of the reasons you should work on your charismatic level is that you can help others become better when heightened. If people meet you and experience positive changes in their lives, they will want to stay close to you.

With this idea, you will also live a more fulfilling and purposeful life; knowing that whatever you do to develop it will help someone else. You can influence people to become better through communication, actions, and the way you relate to others. Being charismatic means, you are so confident that you don't have to be boastful or egotistical.

There is also the concept of optimism with charismatic people as it helps them stay hopeful because they have also to encourage other people. So here is the summary of the idea: charisma is a viable trait you will need to establish and sustain relationships. A charismatic person can easily influence people and contribute positively to their experiences.

Now you know the basic ideas about charisma, but we also have to express the distinction between charismatic and uncharismatic. This distinction is crucial because it helps you reflect on both sides of the concept and fuels your determination to stick to what works best.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHARISMATIC AND UNCHARISMATIC INDIVIDUALS

Charismatic individuals are also friendly and caring towards others (both the people they know and the one they just met). A charismatic person will want to see how you are doing, if you've eaten, or get better after an illness: they don't ignore people's challenges or make them feel unimportant. Please remember this trait as you work towards building great relationships.

If you want to find someone who is trustworthy, then get a charismatic person because that is one of the most amazing traits they possess. You can count on a charismatic individual at any time because they are interested in people and helping others. This quality of dependability is what makes them very reliable, and guess what? People love competent individuals as it is a vital ingredient for any successful relationship.

Charismatic people enjoy other people's company, and this is why you will always find them amid people conversing, caring, and sharing. The charismatic attribute they exude makes it easier for them to enjoy the company of a broad spectrum of people such that they can meet someone for the first time and instantly strike a connection with him/her.

Uncharismatic people are also frigid from the moment you meet them, they can even be daunting, mainly if they have achieved a lot. When you encounter such people, you instantly feel like you are not enough and don't see you because they are wrapped up in their world.

Uncharismatic people are also very shallow-minded: they don't see beyond the surface and fail to establish a deeper connection with people. These are the kind of people who will meet someone for the first time and only focus on what they have to do together and nothing else.

While a charismatic person seeks to know more about someone else, an uncharismatic individual doesn't want to go beyond the surface. For

example, a charismatic person will ask, "How are you doing, and what are your expectations for the conference?" after the initial greetings. But an uncharismatic person puts a stop to the conversation after "Hello" because there is a lack of genuine interest in the other person's responses.

An uncharismatic person cannot be friendly and qualified at the same time because they are not interested in having a deep-rooted relationship with other people. So you can find someone who is highly skilled in his or her job but cannot connect with people because his focus is solely on his task.

In some other cases, you might meet someone who is warm but isn't incompetent: this inconsistency is why such a person lacks charisma because to be charismatic, you have to be able to exude these traits completely.

Yes, charisma is connected to leadership skills because when you are charismatic, you become a leader people look up to and admire. So work on your leadership skills by being assertive, goal-oriented, and helpful to your subordinates.

A charismatic person who exudes leadership qualities will easily influence other people and cause them to become better versions of themselves.

This idea is probably the simplest of all you will discover in this chapter, but it is the most impactful idea when dealing with developing charisma. It wouldn't take so much from you to be a polite person: one who is helpful to others, caring, and with a pleasant demeanor.

No one will become excited at developing a relationship with someone else who is rude, uncaring, and arrogant. Charisma is a positive attribute; you have to imbibe positive traits to make it a part of your life.

You cannot be charismatic without influencing people; thus, the more you start affecting others, the better you get at building charisma. Influence is different from compelling people to do what they don't want to do and do

what you want them to do (that's bullying). By influence here, we mean showing a good example such that other people want to emulate you.

For example, you are being influenced through this book right now as you read, I am sharing ideas that will help you and when you use them, I have succeeded in changing the way you develop relationships. I haven't forced or coerced you into doing anything, but I have shown you why you should stick to my advice because I am an expert in behavioral science, and you can trust in that professionalism.

So you can see that influence is not about pushing people to do what suits your narrative: it is about being so good at what you do that they chose to listen to you. But you've got to do this intentionally just as I wrote this book purposefully.

## BEING OPTIMISTIC

Optimism is closely connected to charisma; if you are going to be charismatic, you must also become optimistic. The emphasis with confidence here is "Challenging times" because it is easy to be confident when things are not so bad.

But being charismatic shouldn't have a timeline with your exhibiting the trait only when things are good. You've also got to express it when things are bad, especially if things are bad for a lot of people at the same time. In such times people look up to charismatic people who will help them through such difficult times.

When you are optimistic, you will not only lift yourself of the difficulty; you can do the same for others, thus building relationships based on vulnerability, trust, comfort, and support.

You can only make people feel comfortable, help them become optimistic, and so the other things charismatic people do when you are interested in them. The interest here is knowing their names alone: I am talking about a sense of curiosity for their wellbeing, interests, and lives such that you are immensely vested in knowing everything about them.

To do this, you have to start paying attention to what people! Pay attention to what they do, say, how they act, and the things that interest them. If you work with someone who talks about his cat, strike up a conversation about the pet. If your child loves a particular series on cartoon network, why not watch with him someday to discover what he finds so fascinating about the movie. I could share tons of examples with you, but I hope the ones mentioned help you get the point: a genuine interest in people will help you build charisma.

Some people just don't along with others, and they always blame others while exonerating themselves from the situation. To be charismatic, you

have to get along with people, and the best way to do this is by being concerned about their wellbeing.

Even the most insulated and introverted person will love it when someone remembers their birthday, calls to check up on them when they are sick or does something kind for them. Even when you meet strangers, get along with them through memorable conversations that set the tone for a good relationship. If you apply all the other ideas you've discovered thus far, it will be accessible to along with others.

Regardless of how famous prominent they are with a charismatic person, you will feel very comfortable. Such persons make you feel comfortable through the way they listen to you, watch you, and react to what you say.

Their verbal and non-verbal communicative patterns help you relax and become fully present at that moment.

You can affect people: start by being comfortable with them first, as this is how you can make them feel the same way. Smile, allow them to speak freely, reply when you have something to say, but don't cut them off and laugh when they say something funny.

If they mention something repeatedly, it means it is important to them so explore the idea by saying it and asking them about it. For example, if the conversation is about going for a vacation, instead of just talking about the places you like get to learn about their favorite destination and ask them questions about the location (even if you've been there before the smile, nod and listen as though it is new information.

Later you can add that you were there at previously and share your experiences. The more comfortable you make people feel, the more charismatic you become.

Smiling is essential when developing charisma because it is the first attribute people notice about you. A smile can be disarming as it helps both you and the other person relax while enjoying the conversation. When you

walk up to someone with a smile on your face, you say, "Hi, there, I am friendly and ready to have a pleasant chat."

It would help if you also smiled always and not only when you want to converse as this enables you to maintain an aura of pleasantness that makes you stand out. People will never forget you for your smile and desire to spend time with you again because your cheerful presence sets them at ease.



## REMEMBER PEOPLE'S NAME

This idea may seem like a trivial one, but it is essential! As little as it may seem, it is a deal-breaker with many people, and it can either make or mar your relationships. Remembering someone's name when meeting them a second time is a sign that you paid attention to them the first time they introduced themselves.

I know it may seem daunting to remember everyone's name, especially if you meet people regularly. Still, it can be quickly done if you pay attention when they introduce themselves. You can also use body attributes or distinct features to place a name to a face such that when you see such elements on the person the next time, you will automatically remember the name.

How did you feel when you met someone prominent for a second time, and they remembered you? You probably felt very special, and that is how you should make other people feel around you.

You can become a charismatic person when you listen to understand what is being said instead of giving a reply. Yes, there is a difference between both ideas, and the distinction is what separates a charismatic person from an uncharismatic one.

A charismatic person listens to understand because he/she is genuinely interested in what the speaker says. Instead of passively listening, he/she focuses on the speaker's words.

An uncharismatic person wants the whole conversation to be over quickly so he/she can reply/respond and move on (this is because there is a lack of interest in what the speaker says).

Always listen with the intent to understand because when you do, you can carry on a fruitful conversation and connect with the other person in the

most fantastic way. People love it when they feel like they are heard and not tolerated.

To become a charismatic person, you have to give more than you take (this relates to everything). Give more of your time, attention, resources, cheerfulness, and everything else even more than the way you receive these things. The more you give, the easier it becomes for you to attain greater heights as a people's person.

You can start with your time: most people are desirous of someone who will listen to them and make them feel seen. So the next time someone wants to talk to you about something, don't rush them or make them feel like you are too busy for them.

Give them the time they need and be generous with your adviser, listen intently, and follow up after the conversation. Be kind and give more of your resources: buy gifts for those who celebrate and be known as someone who enjoys investing in people.

Charismatic people are confident conversationalists; as such, if you want to develop this attribute, you must learn how to manage your nerves when speaking. This idea applies mostly to when you talk to a larger group of people because you want to make sure you get their attention and leave a memorable impression.

Always stay calm before speaking, maintain eye contact, and give reassuring smiles (people will be drawn to you, and this fosters excellent relationships).

Being charismatic means being passionate about developing the right skills that will impact your life and others, which is very exciting because that is what it means to live a purposeful life. You can enjoy meaningful relationships with other people and thrive with people skills when you are charismatic.

A charismatic person has to also think positively at all times as it boosts his/her optimism, which impacts your self-confidence. You can build trust

and respect with people when you are charismatic. There is a concept closely linked to charisma, which is also crucial when discussing building relationships. We cannot have a comprehensive material if we don't talk about this term. Can you tell me what it is? Its emotional intelligence!



## DEVELOP YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is the essential life skill that helps you understand, utilize, and manage your emotions such that you can relieve stress and empathize with others. This skill is also crucial in overcoming challenges, communicating effectively, and defusing conflict between people.

As mentioned in the closing section of chapter three, we cannot have a detailed and comprehensive guide on how to develop better relationships if we don't talk about emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is at the centre of our discourse because it is a skill that is of immense benefit to us, the people around us, and the kind of relationships we develop.

An emotionally intelligent person lives beyond himself and is 100% conscious of how others feel that empathy becomes a natural expression for such a person. People with high degrees of emotional intelligence also understand their emotions such that they can identify specific emotional triggers before they occur.

Emotional intelligence is crucial for relationship success because it helps the individual understand why people react the way they do. Sometimes we observe people's reactions and behavior on the surface, thinking that's all there is. Still, with emotional intelligence, we can understand the underlying factors why they do what they do.

If we can understand why people act and the emotional connections to their behavioral patterns, we can relate with them on an empathic level. For example, instead of yelling at a child to stop crying whenever he has to go to school, and emotionally intelligent parent will try to ascertain WHY the child has such an emotional response to schooling.

Another pupil may bully the child in school, or maybe the child is dealing with separation anxiety from his parents. The child could also not enjoy school because he doesn't have any friends, can you see that by

analyzing this child's emotions we have arrived at some plausible reasons why he doesn't want to go to school.

Just as we have done with this illustration, we also need to ensure that we understand the emotional connection and reason behind a person's behavior. This is crucial for the development of stable relationships. If we don't develop emotional intelligence, we will always misinterpret people's actions, inactions, and responses. In some cases, we will be quick to judge them without an understanding of their emotional reality.

Similarly, a lack of emotional intelligence causes us to feel confused and unable to understand what we feel and why we feel that way. This lack of awareness can make us increasingly hard on ourselves, and in that state, we cannot handle relationships properly.

Emotional intelligence also boosts your confidence level because when you know what goes on with your emotions and when you are in touch with your feelings, you know more about yourself. You will also become emotionally balanced such that you can handle challenging times with stable emotions.

## THE CONCEPT OF SELF-AWARENESS TO AID EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Self-awareness means knowing how you feel and understanding how your emotions affect your actions or inactions. To be self-aware, you must pay attention to every emotional detail in your life from the reason for your laughter to the purposes of a sad feeling.

Being self-aware also speaks of knowing your strengths and weaknesses such that you are conversant with the things you do effortlessly that make you happy and what you struggle with that makes you feel sad.

You can improve your self-awareness level by slowing down and taking a break from your busy schedule to examine your emotions. Keeping a journal also helps when you write how you feel you become more conscious of the feelings.

People who self-regulate are always emotionally intelligent because they control their emotions instead of their emotions controlling them. Self-regulation is about being in charge of your emotions and feelings such that you determine how to respond to specific issues.

For example, if you used to react when someone submits a report late angrily, it is time to regulate your reactions by getting to know why the person was late with the submission. By understanding the reason for the lateness and giving a warning instead of yelling and throwing tantrums, you have regulated yourself better, and that is the hallmark of emotional intelligence.

Another element of emotional intelligence is motivation: motivation is required to maintain the same level of emotional awareness with yourself and others. This realization is why when you are emotionally intelligent, you never tired of reaching out to others and ensuring that they are okay because you are motivated from the inside.

But motivation is an idea you have to improve continually so you can do more for yourself and others. To stay motivated, always find joy in reaching out to other people even as you discover new things about you!



EMPATHY! EMPATHY! EMPATHY!

Empathy is crucial for emotional intelligence, and it is quite interesting because some people mix it up with sympathy. Sympathy says, "I am sorry for your experience," but empathy says, "I can understand your pain because I feel I am going through it as well, and I am here for you."

So with sympathy, you feel sorry for the person and relate with his/her emotional experience from a distance. On the other hand, empathy is akin to being in the person's position such that you feel what he/she experiences.

Emotionally intelligent people find it easy to relate to other people's emotions because they absorb others' feelings. We will talk about empathy and empathizing with people in the second section of this book, so please look out for that idea.

To be emotionally intelligent, you will need good social skills because you have to be an excellent communicator. Know how to strike a conversation with a total stranger and get your best friend who has been hiding her pain to reveal what's wrong.

With excellent social skills, you can also resolve conflict, actively participate in discussions with other people, and remain aware of what's happening with everyone around you.

With these ideas above, you can start developing your emotional intelligence and that ideas introduce us to the practical aspect of the chapter, which entails learning how to become emotionally intelligent.

Emotional awareness is crucial for emotional intelligence: you've got to become mindful of how you feel so you can regulate and maximize it. Being emotionally aware also helps you know how to relate with others on an emotional level because the consciousness of how you feel enables you to become sensitive.

Emotional balance doesn't mean you have to be cheerful all the time: it means being aware of how you feel and trying to adjust it to suit the atmosphere around you. For example, at an event like a wedding or a birthday celebration, you have to be joyful because it is an occasion that brings joy.

If you feel downcast for any reason on such occasion, try to establish a balance by recognizing how you feel and making adjustments to suit the joyful event.

Has anyone ever walked up to you in a moment of stress and asked, "Hey, are you okay?" how did that make you feel? You probably thought, "Wow, how did she know I wasn't okay?" You will also become grateful because despite your inability to share the problem (if it is deeply personal).

Knowing that someone else senses your stress is a relief because it means that someone cares for you, and you have to be that "Someone" for another person. You can tell when changes in their behavioral pattern stress a person: for example, if someone who used to be very cheerful suddenly seems gloomy and sad, don't ignore their change in countenance.

Reach out to understand why he/she has a sudden change in expression, and by doing, you will show you care for them, which is the bedrock of a great relationship. You have to recognize when you are stressed because this is a significant indicator that you are not feeling alright. If you don't feel right, you won't relate well with others.

We did mention empathy, albeit briefly in this chapter, but I have to reiterate it because you cannot be emotionally intelligent and empathic! You need compassion to understand people's emotions, and you need it to stay in sync with how they feel.

Empathy helps you look beyond yourself and the situation: it empowers you with a great sense of curiosity about a person's plight. It enables you to feel their pain, happiness, excitement, disappointment, etc. Imagine how

you will react to your best friend's engagement when you think like her and absorb all her expectations about getting married.

You will be over the moon with excitement like she is because that is what it means to be empathic. When someone close to you experiences a break up instead of just saying sorry, you will reach out and ask about their wellbeing because you know how hurtful a breakup can be. So empathy is crucial to this discourse: check your empathic levels at all times and work on getting better with it.

You can also become emotionally intelligent by communicating from a place of understanding and not judgment. We often discover that it is easier to judge a person's choices when interacting with them, especially if such decisions do not align with our beliefs.

But if you can only take a moment to understand why they do what they do, you will find that you are no different from them. Compassion is a crucial aspect of emotional intelligence, and we must showcase our compassion through understanding.

The fact that your friend thinks differently and expresses emotions differently doesn't mean he/she has to be judged. Even if you feel he/she can do better, how about friendly advice supported by facts showing why his/her way is not sufficient? We must learn how to be diplomatic when discussing with people because it positions us to be emotionally intelligent and supportive.

We can spend a lot of time on this idea because it is essential to the discourse: how else can someone become emotionally intelligent without having a positive attitude? You've got to be positively minded because you will be dealing with varying emotional realities as some of them can make you negatively-minded.

Irrespective of how you feel or how someone else makes you feel, you must maintain a positive outlook because it helps you control your

emotions. Sometimes negativity creeps in when we least expect it to because we let our guard down.

But emotional intelligence requires you to always remain proactive with positivity such that there is no room for negative expression in your life. Be positive with conversations, be positive with your reactions, and be positive about dealing with other people. Some people will come to you to share some of their deepest secrets and hurts when they do that handle the situation with positivity.

## LISTENING ACTIVELY

Be active and not passive when listening to others because it is through communication; you can tell if a person is doing alright or not. Some people listen passively (they hear the words but do not understand the statements); thus, they are unable to grasp what the speaker needs fully.

But when you listen actively, it becomes easier for you to help the other person identify what he/she is feeling and know how to help because, through this listening skill, you have all the facts. Active listening skills are also essential when dealing with your emotional response because you have to listen to yourself as well.

When last did you listen to yourself? Have you ever done this before now? If you haven't, it is time to take action and start doing that because you need to ensure that you are 100% aware of what's happening within your mind and emotions.

We will discuss more extensively on how to handle conflict positively in the next chapter. Still, before we get there, you should know that reacting aggressively to conflict is not a sign of being emotionally intelligent. Regardless of how peaceful you might be, issues will always come up, and you will still deal with challenges.

What matters is your reaction to the challenges because it will determine how well you do with developing emotional intelligence. A crucial aspect of emotional intelligence is control: if you can control your emotions, you can prepare it better, and this is why you must control how you react to conflict.

If you get offended, upset, and angry every time someone criticizes you, you are not emotionally intelligent. People will always have varying opinions about the things you do and share these opinions with you even when you didn't ask for them.

Sometimes their ideas about what you do may be from ignorance and misinformation, so if you get angry about it, how will that help you? To be emotionally intelligent, you must take criticism lightly and not let it ruin your emotions, and you must also do the same for others by not criticizing them to the extent that they feel hurt.

## ARE YOU AN ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATOR?

To be emotionally intelligent, you've got to become an assertive communicator who can express him/herself anywhere and with anyone. You will be dealing with people's emotions and have to discuss such emotional realities with them, but how will you do so if you are not an assertive communicator?

Assertiveness means being bold enough to say what needs to be said most helpfully and politely. Assertiveness relates to being honest with feedback, and all of these boost the level of your emotional intelligence.

Start practicing being assertive with yourself when you look in the mirror. After analyzing your emotions, discuss with yourself on why you felt that way and describe the outcome of your analysis. When you do this regularly, it will also become more comfortable for you to do it with other people who may be in the wrong place emotionally and need your help navigating how they feel.

Emotional intelligence is a vital idea we must maximize in building relationships, and if you take it seriously, you will also enjoy its benefits. We have done this chapter to introduce and elucidate the concept of emotional intelligence, such that it is easy for you to utilize life skills.

Some people understand the value of emotional intelligence, but they don't utilize it because it requires a lot of dedication in paying attention to how they feel. But always remember that anything worth doing is worth doing well: if you are going to get the best out of an experience, you must be willing to give it your best.

If you become committed to developing emotional intelligence, you will observe that you are in a better mental space to build relationships with people. Relationships are not only about the good times and the fun we have with other people: sometimes they can be ridden with conflict because

we are different individuals. Is it possible to handle such conflict positively?  
Let's get answers in the next chapter!





## RESOLVE CONFLICT IN A POSITIVE WAY

No one can talk about relationships without addressing the issue of conflict because where there are people, you will discover conflict. However, the fact that we are dealing with conflict doesn't mean we have to handle it negatively, and this chapter is going to teach you how to handle conflict positively.

When dealing with people, you've got to be mindful of how you relate with them, and this speaks of the importance of words! How do you use words? Do you sue them carelessly? Are you intentional about what you say, or do you "Go with the flow" and say whatever comes to mind?

We talked about emotional intelligence. If you paid close attention to the discussion, you would realize that putting other people first is crucial to building relationships. This realization also means that when dealing with people in conflict, you have to think more about how they react and how your words will affect them than how you feel.

Sometimes when we feel like we have been wronged, we become overly obsessed with proving that we have been hurt, and this makes us say anything which can lead to an escalation of the conflict. But when dealing with conflict positively, we must take a moment to critically assess the situation and arrive at a solution without hurting others.

From another perspective, some people try to avoid conflict altogether, but this approach means you will not be vested in the relationships you have with others. You can only avoid conflict when you are not interested in building lasting relationships with other people, so let's not even talk about it because we are trying to do the opposite.

Now, conflict can happen in different ways, and for various reasons, but one thing is sure; it is caused by disagreements between parties on how things should be done. Sometimes it could be differences in opinion,

interests, and values, which can make people feel the need to assert their views on others.

THERE ARE ALSO TWO KEY THINGS TO NOTE HERE:

1. The conflict between you and other people
2. The conflict between people (without you involved).

Some people find it easy to deal with a conflict that doesn't involve them because then they only have to moderate over the situation. Even such conflict has its peculiarities such that if you don't get the resolution right, you might contribute to a fractured relationship.

At this point, the advice is to take all forms seriously as such that you are willing to achieve a positive outcome regardless of your position in the situation. If you always desire positive resolution of conflict, you will be much more patient with the process.

The conflict that ends on a positive note doesn't just happen; people make it happen when they anticipate such outcomes and use all available resources to make it happen. As such, if you are going to enjoy thriving relationships and sustain them long-term, you must become intentional about how you can resolve conflicts positively.

The practical aspect of this chapter entails teaching you how to resolve conflict positively. Now try to keep an open mind about these ideas so you can maximize them more effectively. The reason for urging you to keep an open mind is because some people feel easily discouraged about resolving conflict positively, especially when aggression is involved.

Please understand that your role with conflict resolution is not to "Force" people to find peace: your purpose is to influence the order and create an enabling environment for them to interact peacefully. Additionally, when dealing with personal conflict with other people, make sure you are an advocate for peace.

I know it hurts when someone hurts you and you still have to be the one suing for peace, but that is what it means to be emotionally mature enough to develop relationships. You have to come to the point where it doesn't matter who is in the wrong: you have to become proactive with peacemaking because you value relationships more than right.

The steps below will help you with both categories of conflict: conflict you have with others and conflict between people you have to mediate. Let's learn.

Every battle has a starting point, which is the source of the issue, and for you to resolve them, you must know the cause. Why is there a problem with this other person? Why does this other person feel aggrieved? Why is there tension between you and this person? Is there a reason why you are uncomfortable with the individual?

These are questions that will lead to uncomfortable conversations, but it is crucial for resolving conflict. Please don't allow the other person to ignore the source of the conflict. Some people tend to do that when they don't want to address the elephant in the room.

The source of the conflict will reveal other issues you probably thought didn't matter but contributes to the overall issues. The cause of the problem will also help you avoid such situations in the future, so you must take this first step.

This idea is most prominent in heated situations when it seems like you have to scream to be heard: well, don't yell! Instead of yelling and being angry, maintain your cool, and be calm in such situations. If you don't remain relaxed, you might end up saying something you regret, which will ruin the relationship.

When you are cool, you can think about the conflict more constructively and arrive at a solution that helps both you and the other person involved. I know it may seem very difficult at some point, especially when there is a considerable problem involved, but you must try to manage your emotions.

Can you see why emotional intelligence is crucial to this issue? When you are emotionally intelligent, you will know how to manage your feelings to control them instead of your emotions.

During the conflict, there are two things you must be good at expressing yourself and listening. We will talk about representing yourself in other steps below, but before we get there, you should know that listening and being a good listener can help you resolve conflict positively. If you are the one embroiled in a conflict, I know you will feel like you have so much to say simultaneously, but if you are talking and the other person is talking, no one will listen to anyone.

You need to establish calm and peace in the process by listening more than you speak. Let another person express him/herself because that is the only way you can hear his/her grievances and think of a workable solution.

Listening also helps you stay calm because when you speak in the heat of the moment, you function from a position of disarray: your thoughts are not articulated, and your words will be incoherent. Understand that your words can make a difference in that state of conflict. Hence, you should relax, listen attentively, and think about how to respond without escalating the issue.

This idea is vital when discussing conflict because it is easy to get wrapped up in the sense that you must be right when in conflict. Some people fight over who is right at the detriment of the relationship such that they end up proving their point and losing an ally. It's okay to prove that you are right, but it is NOT okay to do that at the expense of the relationship.

We have come a long way, and I believe that at this point, you already know that people matter! The entire book and journey are about maintaining relationships.

If you have an issue with your best friend of over ten years, what will matter the most? The relationships which you have built for so many years

or the one issue that can be resolved? If you look back on the over ten-year history you have with this person, there have been times when he/she was right and let you win, so why can't you do the same now?

If you are going to cultivate good relationships, you also have to let go of the idea that you are always right. This concept is an erroneous one that robs you to sustain good connections with other people.

Compromise is an excellent way to help everyone get on the same page and to do this; you have to understand everyone's grievances. Get to know what went wrong that led to a misunderstanding and try to find middle ground with all parties involved. Achieving compromise is never easy, especially if the other person(s) feels vindictive, but it is achievable.

## WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF THE OTHER PERSON?

Start by understanding what the other person needs, your needs, and the desires of other people involved. Then highlight each response by analyzing what it will take to achieve them: at this stage, you will get to know how possible it is for everyone's needs to be met and what should be taken off the list.

You will arrive at a compromise when you discover what is attainable and what isn't, but to also get to this level, the parties involved have to be willing to reach a compromise. So if you are the one involved in the conflict, be open to compromise and willing to work with the other person to resolve the issue.

Compromise may NOT always mean agreement, but it does mean a willingness to make it work, and that is enough to salvage the relationship. Compromise is a positive way of solving the problem and getting everyone to recognize that they play a crucial role in conflict resolution.

This idea relates to the kind of conflict you deal with personally because sometimes some people don't know how to separate themselves from the issue. You are not the problem, and the problem is not you (the problem doesn't define you); as such, don't get caught up in the emotional roller-coaster because you are trying to resolve it.

An ideal way to separate yourself from the situation is to view the problem as what it is: a problem and not something that is a part of you. You can have a problem with someone else and still stay true to yourself, so always keep this mind because it will help you maintain good relationships.

You can also achieve this by being emotionally stable such that no matter how the situation escalates, you don't become overwhelmed by it. You can still smile, relax, and enjoy the thrill of a relationship despite the conflict. If you always isolate the problem from your personality, you will



even have your relationship and move on from the challenge on a positive note.

Yes, I know you are wondering, “Why walk away?” but this idea relates to an extremely aggressive and disturbing conflict situation that sometimes entails violence. If you have tried everything else on this list and tried to achieve a positive outcome without getting results and it is beginning to lead to heightened conflict, then you will have to walk away to make peace.

Walking away is the best option because it helps you step away from the heated situation to reevaluate the issue and decide on a better way to handle it. Don't hesitate to walk away if you feel like you are in the face of violence or if the parties involved will hurt themselves.

If you are trying to resolve conflict and the people get into a fight, try to calm them down, and if it doesn't work, get them to walk away from the situation. You can always encourage them to come back to the table when they are calm because, again, issues will come and go, but we must maintain the sanctity of relationships.

The reason for the conflict may be beneath the surface; as such, when analyzing it, make sure you look beyond what you can see and hear. As such, you may have to discuss with the individuals involved such that you get to understand the emotional issues involved behind the scenes.

If you are dealing with an angry person, get to find out why the person is angry; what are the underlying issues behind the problem/ why does the person feel that way? What makes the person feel upset when something happens? Sometimes the underlying issue may be something connected to his/her childhood or experience that triggers anger.

Those issues beneath the surface must be resolved before you can fix the ones you can see or feel. When dealing with conflict, you have with someone else; you also have to check for your underlying issues.

Maybe you are disappointed in something that has become a pattern in your relationship and fed up with the process. If you don't have honest

conversations about these issues, it will be difficult for you to solve them.

## FORGIVE IN ADVANCE AND ENCOURAGE FORGIVENESS

Sometimes what you need to achieve a positive outcome with the conflict is to practice forgiveness, which can be forgiveness in advance. This idea relates to the kind of battle you experience with people who are a permanent fixture in your life.

For example, if you live with your spouse and you both have conflict over the same kind of issues, maybe you can achieve positivity with the issue by forgiving them for their discrepancies even before it happens. If you know someone you cannot cut off your life does something that hurts you repeatedly, you can protect yourself from the impact of such a situation by forgiving them in advance.

After forgiving the person, work on helping them understand how their behavior affects you and create a positively enabled relationship going forward. More so, if you are dealing with mediating in a conflict, you should encourage forgiveness by helping the aggrieved parties understand why peace is better than conflict. If everyone involved forgiving each other, we will make progress with the battle, protect the relationship, and enjoy fulfilling connections with other people.

Some people try to run away from facing a conflict by avoiding confrontation. But if you always run away from this, how will you deal with the issue? Now encounter here doesn't have to be aggressive or tensed: it relates to being able to speak with the other party involved most honestly.

Sometimes a text or online chat wouldn't be sufficient enough to manage the situation; as such; you have to confront the issue (remember you are not confronting the person to quarrel); you are confronting the issue! In this digitally-enabled age, it is easy to hide behind a DM or an email to express your true feelings, and in some cases, this is sufficient, but in some other conflict cases, it is not.

You will know that it is not sufficient when the conflict remains unresolved after several attempts; then, you have to do it face to face. To achieve success with this confrontation, you have to be patient and willing to listen first before reacting.

Also, do not be hasty in concluding that the situation cannot be resolved when the conflict gets heated, achieve some calm by listening more than reacting. Remember, two angry people cannot make anything positive!

You are on this journey towards learning how to develop relationships as such that is your focus and the most critical aspect of the learning curve.

This realization means that you have to be passionate about relating to people well enough to resolve conflict positively. If you have issues with everyone without meaningful solutions, how can you develop valuable and useful relationships?

With all the ideas shared thus far, you know what to do to get things right with people you may disagree with and those who disagree with themselves. It is okay to have such disagreements, but it is NOT okay to get worse and become harmful. Always seek to save the relationship, and if things must end, let it be on a more positive note.

Now we will take a break from talks about arguments and conflict to something more uplifting, positive and cheerful. Let's talk about the power of laughter in building relationships in chapter six; you will be amazed at what happiness can do for you to cultivate good relationships.



## STOP MUMBLING, START LAUGHING

Communication is at the core of every relationship; thus, you should strive to make it fun, relaxed, and exciting with a consistent dose of laughter. If communication with other people is awkward, dull, or confusing, you will be misunderstood. The same applies to the other person; thus, learning how to laugh is crucial for the development of relationships.

Additionally, as you work on your ability always to laugh, you need to avoid mumbling, murmurings, and complaints that bring in harmful elements to the conversation. This idea of avoiding mumbling also applies to how you relate with yourself: if you mumble more than you laugh, you will become frustrated, which will affect how you interact with others.

Here, we are going to LAUGH!!

Yes, we will take a break from the "Serious" and focus more on something light-hearted, which will help you establish some fun in your relationships with others. In this chapter, you will also unravel the benefits of laughter to sustaining relationships and steps on how you can laugh more intentionally.

Laughter is like medicine that draws people together such that they are in a healthier and more relaxed emotional space. Aside from its psychological benefits, laughter also strengthens the immune system and protects you from the damaging impact of stress. With humor, you can lighten your mood, become inspired to dream more, and connect well with others, thus helping you live a more fulfilling life.

Do you recall how you used to laugh a lot as a child? We were so carefree as children that we laughed and played with friends without worrying about anything. Some people will agree that they had the best kind of relationship when they were children, which is true.

So what happened to us? How did we move from being so carefree to being anxious, worried all the time without a reason to laugh? The answer

is that we grew up, we had to deal with more issues and challenges, making it difficult for us to enjoy those little moments of pleasure.

We have to go back to those childhood memories, we have to laugh more intentionally, and we have to find ways to bring humor into our lives. Without humor, we will have frigid relationships devoid of joy, and we will not enjoy the times we spend together.

More so, laughter is great for our relationships with others, but it is also helpful. As you laugh, the healthier you will be and the more excited you will be about interacting with other people.

Have you laughed at yourself? When last did you laugh at something funny? Do you have great fun and laughter-filled time with people? These are questions that will help you identify your laughter level to know how to either start taking actions towards developing or enhancing it.

We are going to start our practical section by first identifying the benefits of laughter in strengthening relationships. Then, we will move on to unravel ideas on how you can laugh more intentionally. Are you ready to smile now? Let's go!

When there is laughter, there is joy, and when there is joy, there is a lot of harmony between people, and this is what you need to foster positive relationships. This realization is why you should be proactive with enjoying laughter as it will help you introduce it to your relationship with others.

We talked about resolving conflict positively in a previous chapter well if you can utilize the power of laughter, it can become a tool for establishing peace between warring parties. When people laugh, they forget about their issues at that moment, and from that point on, you can start the process of reconciliation.

If you find yourself in a place where people are tensed, don't worry about trying to make everyone relaxed again; introduce laughter. Now, this doesn't mean you should walk in and start laughing (they might look at you

awkwardly). You can start with a conversation, and then introduce funny comments into the conversation that eases the tension in the room.

From that moment, you can make them feel relaxed and consistently introduce more funny comments and illustrations to keep them light-hearted. The more you make them laugh, the easier it is to make them feel free and enjoy their company. Do you feel like your close group of friends is too hostile to each other, you can be the solution to that issue: let them laugh!

Through laughter, people can express their true feelings of joy from the inside. The most beautiful thing about laughter is that it doesn't end when you laugh, it extends into their entire day, and they handle all other tasks they do with so much joy.

If they are very cheerful people after laughing they will become brighter, if they love to hug others, after that moment of laughter they will do that with others. So laughter is like a motivating factor that makes people tap into what they have on the inside and sharing it with others.

Don't worry about making people laugh; start by occasionally laughing, and that feeling will radiate to others. Now let's learn how you can smile more intentionally while avoiding mumbling.

Remember that the idea here is not just to laugh but also to avoid murmurings because if you shouldn't be laughing and mumbling at the same time. So with the steps below, you will find the most effective measures to start laughing more and stop mumbling.

Gratitude is crucial for laughter because when you are thankful for all you have, you will find it easy to laugh. Some happy memories that represent what you are most grateful for can cause you to laugh all the time, and this should be your motivation for encouraging others to laugh.

Do you know why people grumble and mumble? The answer is because they are not conscious of what they have and all they have received. But



when they start practicing gratitude, they begin to become aware of what they have, and their appreciation causes them to become excited.

That excitement will become the springboard on which you will thrive through laughter. Think about when you got something you wanted and couldn't contain your joy when you got it: every time you feel like you are close to being sad or unhappy, remember what you are grateful for and laugh over them. If you cannot think of a particular item that makes you feel thankful, then be grateful for the air you breathe, be grateful for friends, family, and the birds chirping because these are the things that make a big difference.

## ENGAGE IN FUN ACTIVITIES

There are fun activities you can engage in to enjoy happiness and laughter, and you may already be participating in some of them. Still, this time, you've got to do them intentionally. How about visiting a comedy club? Can you go out with friends for karaoke night? Could you spend more time with friends relaxing at a fun event?

Engaging in fun activities will help you unwind and boost your relationships because, at such events, people feel at ease with each other.

Join in what makes other people happy

A most exciting experience with laughter is when you share it with other people, so if something makes a group of people smile, join in, and enjoy the moment. For example, if someone is getting married in the family, everyone is excited to join in the conversation and get excited.

With this step, you will develop a vital skill that aids the development of relationships: you will not struggle with connecting with people over things that make them happy, and laughter will be easily infused in your conversations.

When conversing with other people, introduce fun to the discussion such that you get opportunities to cheer them up, and you are also relaxed while doing that. Bringing fun to conversations should be a life skill that helps you reduce tensions in rooms and help you support people who may be going through a difficult time.

By making people laugh in such situations, you will be building an emotional bond with them such that anytime you are around, they get excited. This idea is one of the charismatic people's traits: they know how to get other people comfortable enough to elicit laughter even in the most severe settings. You have learned how to be charismatic, so this means you can also use this idea to get hem laughing.

To become intentional with laughter, you will have to watch funny videos or television shows that elicit laughter. There is numerous entertaining content online you can use to stimulate laughter, and taking advantage of those platforms will help you become more cheerful around people.

Who doesn't love kids? Children are so amazing that they remind us of a time we were free and could enjoy life fully. If you've got kids, you can become easily intentional with laughter by playing with them. Love the activities they love and watch the kind of movies they enjoy you will be amazed at easy it is to laugh at SpongeBob Square pants or Mickey Mouse.

If you don't have kids, you will surely know someone (family or friend) who has, and you can spend time with them. Children do not have a care in the world; when you are around them, you will feel that sense of adventure that makes you feel free and completely in love with life.

If you haven't spent time intentionally with children before now will be an excellent time to get started as it will help you enjoy laughter, which will also impact your relationships with other people.

Animals are also fun creatures that help us let loose with laughter and playfulness, so if you've got a pet, now is an excellent time to enjoy his/her presence. I know some people are extremely busy that they consider playing with a pet waste of time.

But if you play with the pet, you will be having fun, laughing at his/her games, and being conscious of life. If you don't have a pet, walk around your neighborhood, laugh at the dogs playing around, enjoy the butterflies, and fall in love with nature.

If you want to laugh consistently, you must become friends between people who are funny and also enjoy laughing. Those are the type of people that will make you feel relaxed whenever you are with them such that you will always look forward to spending time with them.

The logic is simple: if you always spend time with sad people and those who do not agree with the concept of laughing all the time, you will never implement them. On the contrary, if you spend time with cheerful people who love life and live to the fullest expressions of joy, you will laugh even in the most challenging times.

Now, as you try to make friends with fun, people also remember to be the same kind of person to other people such that the idea of spending time with you makes them excited.

Practice laughing at yourself and enjoy it because life is not so severe that you have to keep a straight face. Think about all the funny things that have happened to you in the past and let them make you laugh. Maybe when it happened, it wasn't funny, but now it is, and those moments can become opportunities for you to bask in the joyful feeling.

If you have a friend who knows about those funny moments, call him/her up, and share the story, it will make you both reminisce and share a good laugh.

## DON'T FOCUS ON NEGATIVITY

We have to discuss this extensively because some of the reasons people don't enjoy laughter are because they focus so much on negative thoughts. Listen, there will always be challenges, problems, and issues in life (it is a part of life's experience), but you can rise above it.

There is nothing more powerful than laughing through challenges: it is the most empowering thing anybody can do, and it starts with you being intentional with laughter. If you wait until things are perfect, you will never enjoy the special moments in your life, and that also means you will struggle with making other people happy.

Now, this is what you can do: if there are particular situations and people who make you dwell on negative things, make sure you have reasons to laugh when you are in such cases or with such persons. Always counter negativity with laughter!

Lastly, you've got to deal with stress! If you are stressed, you will be unhappy, and if you are unhappy, you will never take the ideas above seriously. Stress can affect the kind of experience you have with laughter because you will feel like you are forcing yourself to laugh.

As such, you have to deal with the issue of stress! Do you remember what we talked about in chapter one about being happy? If you are always excited, even when faced with challenging situations, you will not feel stressed. Be satisfied with your life; don't take things personally and don't get overwhelmed by what you face in life.

If you allow stress to prevent you from enjoying laughter, you will always struggle with developing fun relationships with other people. Instead of maximizing laughter for the benefit of the relationships you build, you will feel drained by the process, and this is why stress should be handled!

You have done incredibly well thus far, and I believe you are going to make incredible progress on this journey towards developing better relationships. However, we have a long way on this journey, and we have done well by discussing the impact of laughter in this chapter. Now you know the importance of laughing and how it changes the dynamic of the relationship you have with yourself and others.

We are still laughing together (I hope you are). In that joyful mood, we will take on a critical and sensitive issue that contributes immensely to the development of relationships. We will be discussing how picking or not picking your phone impacts the development of relationships.



## PICK UP THE PHONE!

Can you hear me scream the words above as though I was sitting next to you? Yes, I am yelling because you must pick your phone if you want to develop and sustain relationships. Technology helps us use several communication channels, but that ease comes at a costly price.

This chapter seeks to address a significant issue that has hindered numerous relationships and teach you how to avoid such pitfalls. Today we have access to text messages, Facebook chats, email, Instagram DM, and other mediums of communication, but these channels cannot replace the value in having real conversations.

Sadly, most people have become so engrossed in their daily activities that they no longer pick their phone calls when someone reaches out. In some other cases, we are quick to insist on the other person sending a message. Now when we skip the traditional means of communication, which entails talking to each other without the barriers of chats, we reduce the quality of our connections in relationships.

I like sharing my experiences with you while discussing this subject because it helps me show you the possibility of specific ideas. Every day, I've had conversations with people who matter to me because I understand the value of being available.

Always take the time to pick up your phone and talk to other people, it may seem like it is a little gesture, but it means a lot when considering the kind of relationships you want to build. Using Skype to communicate with those in your life will go a long way in maintaining and fostering healthy relationships.

It is easy to go with the most convenient option, which entails chatting and texting, but the question is, "Do these channels foster relationships," The answer is no! You will only end up having a conversation without



connections, and this entire journey hinges on building the right connections with people.

If you want people to build relationships and gravitate towards you, you must invest your time in the process by reaching out to them. Sometimes we feel like we don't know what to say when we call, and the reason for this is that we haven't been communicating. If you talk to someone, often you would never get to the point when you don't have anything to say. Consistent communication helps you get comfortable with people such that every phone call is an opportunity to build and develop the relationship.

The emphasis here is also on picking your calls because it is one thing for someone to seek communication with you and another thing for you to open the channel for such communication by picking your phone. Even if you are in a busy place at a particular moment, select the call and promise to call back but don't allow the person's call to go unanswered.

By now, you understand how important phone calls are to developing relationships, so you have to prioritize them so you can always pick your phone calls. The steps below will help you take picking your phone calls seriously, thus fostering well-connected relationships.

Sometimes you need a little help with relationship connections using your phone; thus, it is okay to use reminders. Set reminders to call people often and set reminders to return their calls; you can also set reminders to pick phone calls.

With reminders, you can deal with the issue of being forgetful, and it helps when you have a hectic schedule. If there are relationships you want to nurture, then reminders for phone calls intentionally will help you achieve your goals.

Returning phone calls means you value the person's time and want to make up for the missed call. If you don't return phone calls, people will never call you again, and that is a significant relationship deal-breaker. We

will discuss returning phone calls more when we talk about pre-informing people that you will be unavailable.

I know that digital platforms are all about ease and swiftness with the connection because we live in a fast-paced world: fast food, fast communication, and quick relationships. But relationships take time to build, so you must be patient enough to still rely on the traditional means of communication instead of digital platforms.

Strive to hear people's voices over the phone rather than sending emails all the time and do this intentionally! This realization doesn't mean you cannot use digital platforms to communicate; it only means you should rely less on using them.

For example, if you are trying to rebuild your friendship with an old best friend, don't you think things will flow better when you both speak on the phone? That connection that comes with hearing the person's voice, listening to his/her verbal mannerisms, and being able to laugh over a funny topic strengthens the relationship.

But if you only rely on digital communication platforms, you will miss out on such authentic human connections that will blossom into a beautiful relationship.

You can communicate how you want people to reach you by reaching them through a particular channel. So if you want them to call you often because you want to start doing better picking up your phones, call people instead of texting.

I want you to understand the importance of mental conditioning: you can condition people to relate to you the way you teach them, and this also refers to communication.

If you want people to have more face-to-face communication with you, you will visit more often, and if you want them to call you more often, you will do the same. Whatever you do frequently speaks of how you want people to relate with you, and this is a great way to boost your relationships.

If you want people to call you more often, you will call them instead of texting, but remember that this also means you must pick your phone calls.

## BE CONSISTENT WITH REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

You can also prioritize phone calls by being consistent with reaching out to other people. Stop waiting for people to call you before you reach out (this is a popular societal trend now and isn't cool) you cannot build sustainable relationships by waiting for someone to reach out first before you do.

Remember why you started on this journey: you want to build better relationships and connect with people on a better level. As such, you must learn how to reach out to them first. You cannot do this if you don't pick your phone calls because reaching out means they will reciprocate the gesture.

More so, reaching out via phone calls gives people the impression that they can reach you through such communication channels'. If you reach out and they do the same, what does this mean? It means relationships are formed successfully, and this also means that you will be compelled to pick your phone calls to keep the connection going. Here is a tip that always works for me: if you think about someone, call the person and say, "Hey, I thought about you and decide to reach out."

When that person thinks about you, he/she will do the same, and that will be the start of a beautiful relationship. Isn't it amazing that we can build such a lasting bond with others over phone calls? Yeah, it is but first **PICK YOUR PHONE CALLS!**

There is a common trend with so many people now and their mobile phones: it entails them not having tones (for different personal reasons). If you don't have a tone, you will most likely miss a lot of calls, and when people see that they call you and you don't pick, they wouldn't call again.

When they stop calling, you miss out on the connection, and that is how the relationship ends. Set a ringtone on your mobile device to notify you of an incoming call which will encourage you to pick up the phone. Without a

tone, you will become oblivious of who is trying to reach you, which can sometimes lead to misunderstanding.

I know that you may have set your phone in silent mode to avoid distractions but if you do this pre-inform person that you cannot take calls at certain times. Some smartphones also come with an automated message option that helps you, pre-inform people, if you cannot pick. Using such features is better than not maximizing the value of a ringtone.

Sometimes we don't pick calls and send the wrong message to other people because we are always busy. Well, it will help if you pre-informed people on the times when you will be working, so they don't call at such times. Listen little considerations such as informing people when you will be busy makes them feel like they matter to you, and it also helps you express your desire to connect with them.

A quick message stating, "I will be unavailable from 12-2 pm but will call you back when I am done with my work" goes a long way in depicting you as someone considerate. To develop stronger relationships, you must let people know that they matter, and despite your busy schedule, you are also thinking about them.

The second part of this idea is to fulfill your promise and call by 2 pm after your meeting ends. These are very few gestures that make a difference in how you connect with people; please take them seriously.

Time is the most valuable resource today, and when someone gives your time to communicate with you, don't take it for granted. Pick up the phone, and if you can't pre-inform them, so they know you value the gesture and return the call when you are available, so they know you are a person of integrity who is vested in the relationship and keeps his/her word.

Sometimes we don't get enough phone calls, which makes us cultivate the habit of not picking up because we don't have enough people calling us. When something becomes a consistent part of your life, you will get used to it, and the same applies to phone calls.

So tell people to call you when they ask how to reach you. Don't go with the easy option that entails texting or sending a message via social media platforms. The more you insist on people calling you, the more you get used to picking up the phone, and the easier it becomes for you to strike a connection with them.

If you used to avoid picking calls and you also used to tell people to send you messages instead, it is time to reverse that trend now that you know the impact it has on your relationships.

You can also prioritize phone calls when you are not hasty over the phone because the other person can feel if you are in a hurry to end the calls. If you visited someone and suddenly started to act as though he/she wanted to head out before you visited, wouldn't it be a significant turn off for you? Of course, it will be, and you wouldn't want to revisit the individual; no one wants to be treated that way).

So I urge you to take your time when speaking to other people over the phone, especially if they placed the call. The fact that they called you means they are seeking a genuine connection from you, and if you act hastily over the call like you are too busy to talk to them, they will not call you again.

Many relationships have become "Awkward" because one party gave the other party an attitude over the phone. Because we are dealing with a channel of communication, you might not be able to explain why you are acting that way.

You've got to enjoy phone calls so it will be easier for you always to pick up! Some people don't pick their phones because they don't enjoy talking to people over the phone, but the moment you start enjoying it, it no longer becomes a challenge.

You can enjoy phone calls by always looking forward to your conversations with other people, especially when you make such discussions, fun, and engaging. Whatever you don't enjoy, you will never

do it consistently: this is not only a life principle; it also applies to everything in your life.

## DO YOU ENJOY YOUR PHONE CALLS?

Enjoying the phone calls also means you are passionate about connecting with people, and they will feel that passion for them in your voice. Have you ever spoken to someone over the phone and felt like the call shouldn't end? That happened because the person at the end of the call enjoyed talking to you, and you felt that connection hence the reason you also enjoyed the call.

Relationships are never one-sided as such whatever you want to enjoy from others, you must be willing to give to them. If you want them to enjoy talking to you, you must also show that you enjoy talking to them, and all these things remember always to pick your phone calls!

Relationships are like gardens; it is not enough to have beautiful flowers in the garden if you don't nurture them over time the flowers will wither. If you don't take care of your garden by giving it attention, it will have weeds, and this is how relationships end. Today, I urge you to choose the "Big" and "Small" ideas we have shared thus far seriously because they all contribute to helping you build a beautiful relationship garden.

We cannot exclude the importance of phone calls and communicating one-on-one without digital barriers when discussing building relationships. I hope this chapter will help you change your communication pattern by picking your phone calls now. Moving on now, we will explore the concept of not taking things personally in the next chapter: you will enjoy this chapter!





## STOP TAKING THINGS PERSONALLY

*H*ave you ever felt attacked? Have you felt like someone was saying something directly hurtful to you and took it personally? We have all been in such cases before, and the best way out is to stop taking things personally. Understand that not everything someone says is a veiled insult or a clever insinuation aimed at assassinating your character.

Life will be fun and full of exciting new relationships if we stopped taking things personally and lived fully without such offenses. I know sometimes it may seem like people intentionally try to get at you, but what will you achieve from getting upset after taking it personally?

We are talking about building lasting relationships, but you cannot do that successfully if you always get offended. You are assuming that someone does something intentionally to hurt you. The more conscious you are about offenses, the easier it will be for you to break off relationships because you will most likely have issues with everyone.

People who take things personally are always on the verge of getting into altercations and arguments with others who lead nowhere. Such adverse experiences are huge relationship deal breakers. Now in this chapter, I want you to learn how to avoid taking things personally.

If you don't do this already, I must commend you because it takes a higher level of maturity to avoid such issues with other people. But the steps below will also help you sustain such a positive mindset long-term.

You will take things personally when you are always engrossed in what people think. If you know your worth and are confident in who you are, you wouldn't have to worry about what people say, and this means you can protect yourself from reacting negatively to situations caused by a misunderstanding.

People will have something to say about you: you don't have to listen and don't have to believe them. Focus on your journey and what you are trying to achieve in life and with relationships: make this your mission and never take things personally.

I know it may seem like it isn't the easiest thing to do, but sometimes letting things go is the best thing to do. If you know that you can handle the situation without taking things personally, you can go ahead of trying and resolve it, but if you are convinced it will get to you, then let it go!

No situation or comment should be more critical than your mental health or emotional state as such if a condition is too trivial that you can let do that and stay at peace with yourself. In some extreme cases, you may also have to let go of people who always attack your personality (if it is a constant situation, then it is toxic).

By letting situations and people go, you prioritize your mental and emotional well-being, which is needed to maintain excellent relationships with other people.

## SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM THE PROBLEM

Sometimes people take things personally when they fail to separate themselves from the problem. Understand that it is not about you whatever the supposed conflict may be: it is not about you! It is a situation that is different from who you are; as such, you cannot afford to make it the center of your world.

Handle situations for what they are and move on from them without dragging all of your emotions. If you don't know how to separate yourself from conditions, you will always take things personally, even without realizing that you are doing it.

Making situations about you means whatever is said or done will harm you such that you will always feel drained just thinking about it. You are not what people say you are, and you are different from whatever they portray, so you still separate yourself from the situation.

There is a negative inner voice that prompts you to take things personally, especially when it relates to someone you don't trust. Listening to that voice will create problems out of nothing, strain an already uncomfortable relationship, and be a time-waster.

We started our journey talking about being happy and positive, well, that foundational idea holds sway in this context as you must remain positive in all things. Don't allow negativity to make it difficult for you to move on from unpleasant situations: you can do better than that.

If that negative inner voice keeps telling to take things personally, shut it down, analyze the situation with facts, set emotions aside, and let it end peacefully. You will be glad you took this approach as opposed to being embroiled in big fights over nothing.

This idea doesn't relate to all situations but is helpful in some cases. Sometimes what a person says about you or to you may not have additional

and complicated meaning. As such, you have to take it for what it is without trying to analyze it and discover ideas that were not even intended in the first place.

We sometimes try to find additional meanings when our minds overthink things, and you've got to stop doing this. Some things are plain and straightforward without underlying meaning. Trying to understand what doesn't exist because you want to take things personally will only hurt you, the person, and the relationship.

More so, taking things at face value saves you the stress involved in reading between the lines and deciphering meanings that may not exist. Do you know that many relationships ended because someone was trying to find a problem where there is none?

You shouldn't create a problem because you "Feel" like there is more to comment, action, or inaction. Instead of taking it personally and trying to unravel the hidden meaning, why don't you take the more straightforward route? When you ask, be open to trust the answer and move on.

You must have heard this statement above at some point, and it means seeing the good in people's intentions even when it seems like you shouldn't. Giving people the benefit of the doubt means you are not quick to label what they say or do, and you are giving them room to explain what they mean.

Sometimes we take certain statements to heart (personally) when we assume the worse about people. This realization may also stem from the fact that we may have heard about the person from someone else and use that information to judge them.

But the illustration above is wrong! You've got to experience people for yourself and know them for who they reveal to you without using third party analysis to weight in on their character. Give the benefit of the doubt even when it seems you may be wrong because by doing this, you also

protect yourself from the emotional roller coaster, you will experience if you take things personally.

Sometimes we take things personally when we are not relaxed in charged cases. In such scenarios, we feel the urge to say something or do something that asserts how we feel, but when you do this in a charged atmosphere, you will end up saying something you don't mean. So relax!

Relax during an awkward conversation with someone else on something you "Should" take personally. Relax when it seems like the person has so much to say about your character that isn't true and attentive because you will use their words to change the narrative.

## RESIST THE URGE TO EXPRESS ANGER

Resist the urge to yell when someone else is screaming and avoid embarrassing misunderstandings because you were not relaxed enough to listen. In a tense situation, anything can go wrong, and because we are keen on nurturing and not tearing down relationships, we must maintain calm in such cases.

Emotions can sometimes be misleading because people can easily manipulate it to suit their narrative, and this realization is why you must insist on facts when dealing with specific issues. For example, if someone came crying to you about something someone else “Allegedly” said about you, which was hurtful, you’ve got to know if it is right before reacting to the tears.

Sadly too many people are wired differently such that they react to the emotion (tears, anger, bitterness, or even joy) first before dealing with facts. People lie, and men and women can say anything to trigger a response from you, but truth and facts are constant.

## FACTS OVER FEELINGS ALWAYS

Regardless of how the situation may be (involving you personally or not), seek to know the facts before anything else. In some cases, when the situation relates to us personally, we may feel compelled to give an emotional reaction (because emotions are dominant traits). Still, by reacting that way without first getting an accurate picture of the situation, you may misinterpret the situation.

When you misinterpret it, you end up taking it personally, and that is where the problem starts with the person(s). This whole situation that should have been resolved with fact-checking will become a hurtful cycle were relationships sadly end.

If you are steeped in negativity, then you will always take things personally because you see something wrong with what someone says. A negative mindset is a breeding ground for all kinds of thoughts relating to the interpretation of what people say or do to you, such that you will always believe the worst-case scenario.

It would help if you intentionally cut off negativity from your life in all its manifestations (mind, thoughts, people, and things). Be a real-life portrayal of what it means to be positively-minded at all times, and to do this; you've got to see the good FIRST in every situation.

Do you have someone in your life people describe as one who always sees the best in other people? That is how you should be: someone who understands the best even when others see the worse because that is a great way to avoid taking things personally.

A confident person doesn't need to take things personally because regardless of what anyone says, they're comfortable with who they are and know that those words or actions do not define them. Instead of taking things personally, confident people try to help the other person who may be



taking shots at them. This is the level of maturity everyone should aspire to as it aids the development of peaceful relationships.

Are you confident right now? Do you feel secure in the image of yourself you believe is right? Do people's words quickly get to you, or are you inspired by your journey enough to consistently work on yourself? Try to provide honest answers to these questions as it will help you unravel truths about yourself, which will also help you know how to handle external comments you may be tempted to take personally.

When you are busy and all about your business, you will not have the time to take things personally because you are consumed with what brings you closer to your goals. Don't stay idle: in this state, you will have the time to read meanings into every text message or statement someone says because your mind is unoccupied.

So get busy with life, work, family, and building relationships. Time doesn't wait for us, and for you to maximize it, you must be actively engaged in doing whatever is necessary to get you ahead in life.

Busy people don't have the time to feel sad about something that doesn't matter to them. They may think about it, but because they have bigger goals and things to achieve, it slips out of your mind. A busy and purposeful person is fully aware that every second counts and wouldn't waste it taking things personally.

If you discover that you have been giving so much energy to things that you shouldn't give energy to, it is time to re-evaluate your schedule. Are you engaged and busy with life? Are you passionate about going after your dreams and building relationships, or are you busy taking things personally? Get your priorities right, and it will help you avoid taking things personally!

That person who makes you feel like you have to take what he/she did personally may be hurting from something else: remember all we discussed on being emotionally intelligent. Do you also recall what we said about

looking beyond the surface? Yes, sometimes people act, react, and say certain things because they are hurting.

Putting yourself in their shoes helps you understand why they behave that way and see how you can help them balance their emotions. Now, this idea doesn't apply to ALL situations, but in some cases, if it happens with someone you love instead of taking things personally, understand the unseen reason for their actions.

If you take the initiative to understand why they behave the way they do, you will be amazed at what you will discover. This realization is one reason why I advise people not to be hasty in reacting or responding to certain situations because it could be more than you think it is behind the scenes. We will talk about being patient very soon in this chapter.

To avoid taking things personally, you sometimes have to respond to the situation or the other person at a time that is mentally convenient for you. For example, if there was a heated exchange at the office, and someone mentioned your name in the process instead of responding right away, why not wait to cool off?

You may not know this, but taking the time to cool off in such situations will save you from yourself. You will take better control of your emotions, analyze the situation, and decide how to respond without taking things personally. Sometimes the other third parties involved in the case may want to compel you to take action and say something but don't give in to this (you may find something hurtful and even though that moment passes the relationship will never be the same again).

We are not trying to break away from relationships that can be fixed; we are not trying to throw people under the bus for little mistakes, come on take your time amid a heated moment, and respond when you are in a better emotional state.

Of course, you've got to be patient with people to avoid taking things too personally. When we take things personally, it means we are impatient

with people, and we hastily make wrong conclusions. Our impatience may stem from the fact that we don't allow them to explain themselves or don't let them say what they mean, so we assume that meaning and take things personally.

But in building relationships, patience is required! If you cannot be patient, you cannot rise above the issues that come with dealing with other people. You've got to be patient enough to let people say what they mean before taking things from 0-100. When next you feel like you have to take things personally and feel offended, remember that patience is a valuable trait of any relationship.

We are approaching the end of an exciting journey together, and I am beyond excited about all the progress you've made thus far. You have been such a competent reader who has stayed true to the process and committed to the idea of growing relationships: I commend your efforts and how that with this chapter, you have learned how not to take things personally.

Chapter nine will unearth ideas on how you can avoid another significant pitfall that affects the development of relationships. We will discuss how to stop jumping into the conclusion (yes, this is also important to the discourse). Flip over to the next chapter for more ideas on the topic.



## DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS

*J*umping into a conclusion when we think we know everything about a situation is easy. Still, if we consistently do this, we will never experience the joy of having real conversations with people. Many relationships have been compromised because one party jumped into a conclusion without getting the right information about a situation.

This chapter will focus on avoiding jumping into conclusions and maximizing the right skillset and conversational tools. Most people who jump into conclusion do so out of impatience: they fail to recognize the possibility of multiple interpretations for specific events, which makes them miss out on the authenticity of the moment.

When dealing or relating with people, you've got to be patient because if you are not, jumping into the conclusion will become a regular experience that causes friction and tension in your relationships. Being cautious and suspicious are deeply rooted in human nature. It is common for people to suspect other people's motives because no one wants to be the victim in any situation.

However, some people go overboard with their insane theories such that they start to play multiple scenarios in their heads that enrages them and makes them resentful of another person. Sadly, that person you may become resentful of may be innocent and doesn't have anything to do with it. Still, because you are impatient, you quickly jump into a conclusion, which results in problems.

More so, jealousy, anger, bitterness, and insecurities are negative emotions that propel people to jump into conclusion. When you are angry at someone who did something to hurt you, it becomes easier to jump into a conclusion because of the impact of the negative emotion (anger).

In that state of anger, you wouldn't think about what is objective or what is right or what I factual your mind is tailored to vent, which makes you assume the worse with that situation. The same principle applies to insecurities, and this applies mostly to people in intimate relationships with their partners.

Here is a famous example, so a woman sees a red lipstick stain on her husband's shirt. Because she is already insecure in the marriage, she instantly jumps into the conclusion that her husband is having an affair. At that moment, regardless of what her husband may say, she will not listen: they may get into an argument that can escalate into a split if it isn't adequately managed.

There are countless stories of marriages, relationships, and engagements that have ended because of insecurities that led to jumping into conclusion. Things would have been different in such relationships if one of the partners (the one who jumped into conclusion) allowed the other person to explain.

There is also the problem of insecurities, which may have been a recurring problem in the relationship for a long time. So when uncertainties meet such awkward situations, the person instantly finds reasons to jump into a conclusion.

With this illustration, you will agree that clearly, there are layers of misunderstandings that lead to jumping into conclusions: so this is not an isolated idea. There is also the concept of effective communication: when people don't communicate effectively, it makes them miss out on crucial points of information, making it easy for them to make erroneous assumptions.

## BEING 100% PRESENT

Effective communication goes beyond listening to what someone else is saying and contributing to the discourse. To communicate effectively, you must be 100% PRESENT and listen intently to understand what is said because this is crucial to understanding what transpired. As you may already know, every chapter has a practical section where you will learn how to implement what you've learned immediately. Let's discover how to avoid jumping into a conclusion, shall we?

Yes, pause! Sometimes that is all you have to do to avoid jumping into conclusion, and although it seems like the easiest thing to do, it is also the most difficult for some people. When you are in a situation where you have to react and most likely assume the state of things, do not do or say anything: just pause!

When you pause, you take a moment to think objectively about the situation such that you arrive at a logical conclusion instead of a hasty one. Do you remember what we said about being patient? This idea of taking a pause is where patience is required because if you are not a patient person (especially with people), you will quickly jump to conclusions, and in most cases, after doing this, you will realize that you were wrong. Take a pause, and you will be grateful for that moment.

Don't jump into conclusion if you haven't gotten the entire story first. Always remember that there are **THREE SIDES of every story**:

1. The first party's side of the story
2. The second party's side of the story
3. The truth

Now the parties involved in the issues will only tell their "Side" of the story, which *may not* be the truth. It is your responsibility to know the whole story first, which is the truth before deciding how to react.

By always insisting on the truth and knowing the whole story, you will first avoid the pitfall of jumping into a conclusion. Instead of jumping to a conclusion, you will be better informed about what's happening and enable a solution based on the information you've received.

Sometimes we jump into conclusion when we overthink everything. Something small may happen, and because of overthinking, we blow it out of proportion such that it becomes a huge issue: while it is okay to analyze problems, do not OVER explain them.

Overthinking makes you create ideas and concepts in your head, which may not be true, and when you rely on such purposes, it becomes a source of confusion to you regarding the issue. If something uncomfortable happens, understand why it did and the role the other played in enabling it.

Then, react in a way that deals with the issue instead of attacking the person and arriving at hasty conclusions. In all of this, you are not supposed to overthink, over assume or heighten the situation.

This idea particularly relates to peculiar relationships between very close individuals such as those in romantic relationships, friends, colleagues, married couples, and other categories of such relations. Now in some of these relationships, there are historical antecedents and previously experienced issues.

Thus, it is easy for people in the relationship to reference such past events as the reason they jump into conclusions. But we have to be intentional about allowing people to change and let go of the past. Of course, if the person is unwilling to change, you may have to walk away, but if you are dealing with someone else who has corrected his/her mistakes and is making progress, don't jump into conclusion by referencing his/her past.



For example, if your best friend always calls you drunk on Friday evenings and promises to change, you have to benefit from it. If your friend calls you on another Friday night, don't think about all the past nights you had to get her from a drunk spot, don't jump into conclusion assuming that she is calling because she's drunk again.

Pick her calls and handle the situation, and you may be shocked to realize that she's calling for something else. Imagine if the people in your world using your past issues as an excuse to jump into conclusion about you, how will you feel?

## QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, AND MORE QUESTIONS!

Think about this, have you noticed that I have often asked you numerous questions throughout this journey and book? The reason for such consistent questions is because I want you always to analyze your thought process and understand why you do what you may think is reasonable.

If I don't ask you questions, I may never get you thinking, and if you don't ask questions, you may never realize the truth about the situations you face. The same principle applies to the concept of jumping into conclusion: you can avoid doing that by first asking questions.

If you are dealing with only one person, ask him/her questions about the situation for clarification, and until you have received an understanding of what transpired, keep asking questions. A person with the right answers and the truth about the case will not jump into the conclusion because he/she is informed. More so, asking questions helps you establish calm in the case such that you remind the other person of your willingness to resolve any misunderstanding instead of jumping into a conclusion.

Sometimes you have to accept that you have made an error in judgment and will stop you from jumping into conclusions. Some people go right ahead and still jump into conclusions because they never admit they may have been wrong.

But for you to nurture the right relationships, you must understand that sometimes you may be wrong, and it is okay to acknowledge that, take a step back and reevaluate your position on the issue. If you ignore your error and jump into conclusions, you will be damaging the work you've done to take the relationship from where it was to where it is now.

Sometimes we fail to admit that we may have been wrong because we don't want to change our stance, position, or opinion about a person or

situation. If you don't change, you would miss out on knowing the truth about a person or situation, and that is the worst-hit a relationship can take.

How we think about people matters a lot when considering the concept of jumping into a conclusion. Listen to this: if you already have a preconceived idea about a person and hear something about the person that seems like he/she did it, you will instantly believe it.

Thus it is crucial to reevaluate how you form opinions about people: stop judging people based on what they wear, how they look, or the kind of people they spend time with, especially if you don't know them personally. You cannot build a suitable relationship with people if you don't get to know them personally: knowing them means you are open to allowing them to counter specific ideas you may have about them. This also helps you avoid jumping into a conclusion.

Always create an opinion about someone after you have interacted with them because that is the best way to know the content of their thoughts. The next time someone does something, and you feel the need to jump into conclusion, ask yourself "Do I know this person enough?" if you don't, be patient enough to find out more about him/her before concluding.

Groupthink is a concept that relates to the idea of making a decision based on a consensus: it is a process that leads to poor decision-making processes, and it also leads to jumping into conclusions. Groupthink within this concept happens when everyone forms an impression about a situation or person and adopts that idea without knowing the situation for yourself.

## BE INDEPENDENT IN THINKING

Don't jump into conclusion because everyone else is doing the same.

Don't label people as something they are not because a group of people thinks that way, and the more you stay away from the influence of groupthink, the more independent you become in thinking. To avoid jumping into a conclusion, you will need to be independent in thinking that you are patient enough to understand a situation or person before passing the judgment.

You can void jumping into the conclusion by reordering your thoughts. If your thought pattern is tailored towards being hasty with conclusions because you believe a one-sided story, then it is time for intentional correction.

Instead of thinking, "I know he did that" without hearing his side of the story, you should change your thought pattern by saying, "That sounds very disappointing, but I will like to his side of the story." Giving people such opportunities to explain the situation and what happened helps strengthen the relationship you have with them.

Imagine if someone else always jumped into a conclusion when you do something with a different intention, how will you feel? Imagine if no one allows you to explain how you will get your message across to the other person? If you think about how unfair it is not to say your piece, you will also have to reorder your thoughts to allow people to have their say.

As mentioned earlier on the concept of jumping into a conclusion is not an isolated idea: something triggers it, and depending on the dynamics of the relationship, it can be a negative emotion. If a person is jealous of another person, it will be natural to jump into a conclusion when an issue arises.

Here is an example: so Jane and Lisa work in the same company, Jane seems to be spending a lot of time in the boss's office and also gets promoted quickly. Lisa believes she works harder than Jane and is jealous because she doesn't get that kind of promotion.

A rumor starts to swirl in the office that the boss is having an affair with someone (in the office). Now Lisa (already dealing with her jealousy) swiftly jumps into the conclusion that the person involved with the boss is Jane.

She doesn't bother asking Jane about it and starts to become distant from her. Soon enough, the truth is unveiled, and it wasn't Jane. Lisa feels sad about her erroneous assumptions, but it is already too late for her to reestablish the connection she had with Jane. The relationship between both women is severed forever unless Jane forgives Lisa and builds a working friendship with her again.

Can you see how harmful emotions aid jumping into conclusion and the breakdown of relationships? Your best bet is to avoid all forms of negative emotions as it can cause more harm than good.

You will enjoy more fulfilling relationships when you no longer jump into conclusion, and this chapter has introduced you to some of the most effective steps you can use to achieve this idea. When we dive into the conclusion, we fail to allow people to set the record straight. Now you know what to do to get it right, and again, you have achieved a significant milestone on your journey towards developing great relationships.

Chapter ten takes on the concept of spending time with people instead of staying locked up in the house: let's learn how to become intentional with reaching out to people.



## SPEND MORE OF YOUR FREE TIME WITH PEOPLE

Do you believe it is possible to cultivate great relationships when you spend most of the time locked up indoors? The answer is NO, but some people still expect to have thriving relationships while alone. If you enjoy relationships with other people, you have to reach out, which means spending time together.

The emphasis here is "Free time" because some people may want to use work commitment as an excuse for not connecting with people. So yes, we agree. YOU ARE BUSY! But you've also got some free time so what do you do with your free time. You can use your free time to spend more time with people instead of being locked up at home.

More so, there is also the concept of being an introvert, as some people say they enjoy spending time indoors and being alone. So we do have to address this issue. If you are an introvert, if you enjoy staying indoors, it is a function of your personality, and you have to decide what you want.

If you want to develop and nurture relationships, you must move out of the "Comfort zone" of your home and spend time with people. There are different types of investments one make in life and let me tell you this the BEST kind of investment is the one you make into people's life.

So if you are 100% certain that you are ready to nurture relationships, you have to become intentional about how you use your free time. I am so excited about this chapter because it is a vital part of our discussion.

Here is the truth: you cannot build relationships successful if you do not dedicate time to people. You can also spend time with people from your home while being locked up, but it will have to be done digitally, and it will not be as authentic as it will be when you do it face-to-face.

Have you been on a Zoom call before? If you have, you will agree that even if the calls' objective is achieved, it will not feel as good as if you are interacting with the person physically. If you remain at home, you will miss

out on a lot of opportunities for genuine connection with others, and in this chapter, we will discuss a lot of ideas around this concept so you can step away from being locked up at home to spending time with people.

This chapter is in three sections: the first section will focus on the benefits of spending time with people, the second section focusses on the disadvantages of being locked up at home, and the last part highlights ideas on how you can spend time with people.

The last section is relevant because some people are willing to nurture relationships and step out of their homes, but they don't know how to do that or the activities they should enjoy with others. So look forward to the last section because you will get a tone of ideas on how you can spend time with people (you will love that section).



## SPENDING TIME WITH PEOPLE ENABLES A SENSE OF BELONGING

When you spend time with people (as opposed to staying locked up indoors), you develop a sense of belonging, which makes you feel alone. Spending time with people helps you build your "Tribe" This also means you will have a reliable network of people who support you when you need them.

Some people easily slip into depression when they don't have that sense of belonging, and it is because they feel alone with their challenges and joys. But when you spend time with other people, you will have people to share your laughter and sad days; they will also lean on you when they need help. This realization is the essence of building relationships!

Spending time with people also means you get to experience great relationships that are different from what you will experience with digital connections. You will have authentic moments when you feel people's energy, connect with them, and share special moments with them.

The relationships you invest in are the ones that will make a massive difference in your life, and this is why you must become intentional with spending time with other people.

Spending time with aids with stress reduction, especially when you spend time with cheerful people who know how to pull you out of a dark mental space. Have you ever had a bad day and called your best friend to vent your frustration? How did you feel after the phone call? You felt good, right?

Okay great, now have you ever had a bad day and visited your friends to express how you felt? Which experience was better? Talking on the phone or talking with your friends face to face? You will agree that talking to your

friends face to face is more relieving, and it can reduce your stress faster than when you keep the information to yourself.

If you stay locked up at home, you will lack excellent communication skills, and without such skills, you cannot build healthy and happy relationships. You will know how to talk to yourself because you are spending time with yourself at home, but you wouldn't know how to maintain a connection with other people.

## DEVELOP EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Poor communication skills are responsible for poor people skills, and the only way to fix this issue is to be 100% invested in the idea of spending time with people. In the eleventh and last chapter of this book, we will talk about traveling and how it aids the development of relationships, but if you stay locked up in your home all the time, how will you share your travel stories with other people?

Don't deprive yourself of developing excellent communication skills, so get excited about spending time with people.

We extensively discussed emotional intelligence because of the vital role it plays in empowering you mentally and emotionally to be there for yourself and others. But all we learned about that concept will not be useful if you stay home all day avoiding people.

How can you tell you are emotionally intelligent if you don't interact with people and see how you respond to their issue? Again the digital world cannot help you with this, so don't think about replacing your need for human connection with your smartphone.

You can only develop your emotional intelligence when you spend time with people and invest in being emotionally available for them. Remember this idea the next time you feel tempted to shut yourself out of the world.

## THE POWER OF SUPPORT GROUPS

A support system doesn't always mean having people around you when you are in trouble (yes, they do that, but it isn't all of it). A support system is also a group of people that can be there for you in ALL of your life's moment (even the joyful ones), and you build this kind of group (it doesn't just happen).

Invest time and energy into building the support group, which can consist of different people from childhood friends to mentors, colleagues, neighbors, cousins, etc. If you stay locked up in your home all the time, you will not have such support because you haven't invested time building the relationships.

A support system doesn't work to favor only one person; you also have to do the same for other people, and this means spending time with them. Imagine living a life without any support from anyone else? If you get a job or a promotion or get engaged, and you don't have anyone to call to share in your joy, how will you feel?

What about reading this book? If you don't have a support system or close-knit friends, how will you share all you've learned with others? You must build a support network of friends around you, and staying locked in the house wouldn't help you achieve this.

I have a great support network of people who are always available for me, and this is because I invested in spending time with them, you can have the same experience (maybe even better) if you get out of the "Locked up in the house pattern)

Another disadvantage of being locked up in your home is that you will feel overwhelmed with all of the challenges you deal with and not have someone to share physically. You can share some of your problems over the phone with someone else, but is it the same? Sometimes all you need is a

hug, a smile, and time spent with someone who reassures you that everything is okay.

If you consistently isolate yourself from other people and fail to strike these connections, you will miss out on the opportunity to share your challenges with others. You will also miss out on the opportunity to comfort others and be there for them in their most vulnerable moments. So staying locked in has more disadvantages than advantages, especially if you need emotional support.

The first idea I want to share with you is the concept of priority: staying indoors locked up all the time is something you can easily do when you don't make spending time out a priority.

Think about this, all the things you give attention to in your life are a priority, right? Your job, family, and other things you love, so why don't you make time with others a priority? Prioritize it by adding it to your schedule and planning towards it.

Sometimes when we know that something is essential, we can still become complacent when we don't prioritize it. Without prioritizing it, you can remember to do something and not do it because it hasn't become a priority.

For example, going to work every day is a priority because you either love your job or are just showing up to get paid and pay your bills. Visiting your parents often (especially as they age) is also a priority, but why does it seem like you can cancel your parents visiting time and replace it with a work-related event?

The answer is that you have prioritized one (your job) and haven't done the same for your parents. Until you place both ideas on a priority list together, you will always do one effectively and committedly but fail to keep up the same energy with the other one. Spending time with people is also important because it entails building relationships, so don't place it at the bottom of your to-do list. We are nothing without good relationships.

Suppose you are going to enjoy quality time with other people, then you must learn how to plan for such events. Sometimes timing can be both a blessing and a reason for people not spending time together, so you must get that aspect right. You may be available every weekend, and they are not available and vice versa.

Some people use the lack of a synched schedule and time to avoid spending time with other people, so they stay locked up in the house. But if you plant towards it and work with others involved, you all can arrive at an agreeable time and location.

Let me say this to you quickly before moving on to another idea: when it comes to spending time with people, sacrifices must be involved. You wouldn't have it easy all the time (everyone will not be available when you want them to be). So be patient and willing to make it work. Being considerate of other people's time is crucial to show them you care about their schedule, and you can all still make it work regardless of how tight the plan may be. Don't avoid the planning phase; it makes things easier for everyone.

Exercise and engaging in physical activities are also great ways of spending time with other people. If you are not a fitness enthusiast, we all know the value and importance of keeping fit; thus, doing it with other people can be exciting. If you are unsure about what you should spend time with other people, this is a great idea that will help bring all the people you want to nurture relationships with together.

You can decide to visit a gym together or have a home workout session where everyone feels free to participate. You will be keeping fit, staying healthy, and building significant connections with other people. Other outdoor activities you can do together to stay fit and enjoy each other's company include cycling, swimming, running, hiking, mountain climbing, etc.

Spending quality time doesn't mean meet people somewhere or in a neutral place all the time; sometimes, it will help if you paid them a visit in their homes. This idea is something they should also do by visiting you, but people will only do such things when you take the initiative.

Make it a habit to inform people that you will be visiting them, and within the comfort of their home, you will strike a connection with them. Visiting others also makes it easier for you to bridge the gap with them (if there are frictions in the relationships).

Some people love hosting others in their homes, so if you get an invitation to maximize it, show up, and ensure that you make it a worthwhile and memorable visit.

Who doesn't love weekend getaways? We all do! Weekend getaways are great because it helps us unwind from the busy schedules of an entire week and enables us to take a break from stressful activities. If you are looking forward to developing great relationships with people, then you will need to maximize this idea.

With weekend getaways, you can choose a particular place to visit with friends and family and organize the trip such that everyone has time for it. During such getaways, you will get toy recharge for a new week, get closer to people, and understand how to relate better with each one of them.

Your weekend getaway doesn't have to be a pricey location you cannot afford: the idea entails leaving the familiar territory and taking a break from the regular things you do. Thus, you can start with affordable places that offer a lot of games, and don't forget to seek the opinion and advice of those who will be on the getaway.

If there is a relationship you are trying to heal, then the weekend getaway is an opportunity to do so as you can spend time talking with the person to unearth the reasons for the awkwardness between you two.

Another way you can spend quality time together is by remembering major and significant life events, which will mean a lot to other people.

Remember birthdays, anniversaries, new jobs, new relationships, etc. But it doesn't stop with remembering these life events; you also need to celebrate them because doing this helps you send a message to the other person saying, "I think about you, and I wish you well."

You will be amazed at the outpouring of gratitude you will receive from the people whose extraordinary life event you remembered. If your parents are alive when was the last time you celebrated their birthday? Do you commemorate their anniversary? Are you conscious of your best friend's upcoming nuptials?

Knowing these special events is important because people like to feel loved, and when you make them feel good, you become a part of their life for good such that they also become a part of yours.

Entertainment is a binding agent in any relationship because laughter and fun bring people closer. If you are going to spend more time with people, you must engage in entertaining activities together. Do things that make you all laugh, live in the moment, and feel at ease.

If you don't know how to create such engaging and entertaining activities, reach out to someone who knows how to do it and get some ideas. The more entertaining activities you all engage in together, the easier it becomes to drop all guards, authentically express yourselves and boost the relationship.

And entertaining activity can be as simple as forming a new book club (if most people you know love to read) it can also be a mums club when you met with other mums to discuss peculiar challenges with their kids. You can engage in outdoor activities that bring you all closer together.

You cannot spend time with other people by being available only when it is *convenient* for you. You've got to be available for them when they need you, and this requires time and dedication to the relationship. Spending quality time sometimes means being there for someone going through a rough time and needs your emotional support.



But if you are only available when it suits you, then that person cannot share his/her difficulties with you. So what is the essence of a friendship or relationship when you are not there for the person? You have to be selfless on this journey towards building relationships, and this means being present when someone needs you even if it is not convenient for you.

Being there when someone needs you is one of the most highly appreciated gestures in any relationship, and if you do it for those you love, they will be grateful for you. Sometimes life gets in the way: we feel like we have so much to do; we don't have time for such commitments. Make time and emotionally invest in the people you nurture relationships with: you will be glad you did!

Spending time with the same people doesn't mean you should do the same old things together; you've got to be creative with activities you engage in, so it's fun and refreshing. With this realization, I advise that you spend more time trying new things and enjoying new activities together.

If there are games you've always wanted to play or places you want to visit, take the initiative and enjoy it with your group. Trying new things together keeps the relationships refreshing such that no one feels bored, and these new experiments will cause you all to look forward to your time together.

## REMAIN CONSISTENT

When considering spending time with people, plan to be consistent! We haven't gone through this detailed journey just so you can connect with others one day and not do it again for another two years or more, come on! If you spend time sparingly with other people, you won't build solid relationships, which means people will not consider you a stable part of their lives.

You've got to be consistent with reaching out and spending time with other people, which is why planning is crucial. If you are a busy person, you might struggle with keeping in touch, so make time for it by being intentional with planning.

If you are consistent with reaching out and building relationships, you will discover over time that you have created a network of people who can depend on you and vice versa. You have been consistent with this book thus far reading from the beginning to this point, apply that same consistency when planning to spend time with other people.

Spending time with people remains one of the best ways you can organically connect with other people. I hope this chapter has helped you generate ideas on how to communicate with people instead of staying locked up at home.

I found this chapter very interesting and fun to write because if you get this idea right, you will get all other things right. After all, once you can connect and spend time with them, you will work on your emotional intelligence; you will be more emphatic, etc.

It feels like we can end the journey right here because we have covered so much content that I feel proud of your progress. But we must finish excellently as we started that same way: so let's take one more trip around

the world as we discover the value of exploring different cultures and how it relates to developing relationships.



## DO SOME TRAVELING AND EXPERIENCE OTHER CULTURES

We started this journey talking about JOY and POSITIVITY, and now it is time to travel the world because you have done well learning how to build the right relationships with other people. However, you wouldn't be traveling the world and experiencing different cultures just because it "Sounds good." You have to do it to nurture your relationships.

You can always enjoy trips with friends, family, lovers, kids, spouses, and other people you want to nurture relationships with to maintain a connection with them. Experiencing new cultures with those you love revitalizes the relationship and helps you become a happier person because traveling is therapeutic.

In this chapter, you will unravel the benefits of traveling and how experiencing new cultures helps you get better with your relationships. You will also unravel the most exciting ideas about how you can enjoy the traveling experience.

What is life, and what are relationships without memories? Nothing! Thus it would help if you strived to build memories and enjoy the moments you encounter when you travel. What are your favorite memories of traveling? Do you still love thinking about the trips? Then get ready to create more memories as you gear up for more traveling.

Oh, I love this advantage of traveling because it is crucial for building relationships. The more you travel, the more you have information to share with others which serves as the basis for conversations that blossom into friendship.

Imagine meeting someone who moved to the same place as you did, but you both had different experiences. Just talking about that trip from different angles is enough to spark hearty conversations.

## SEE THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF OTHER PEOPLE

Sometimes what we need to nurture new and better relationships is to see the world through the eyes of different people, and this is what traveling does for you. When you travel, you see the world through different lenses, and it helps you understand how small you are compared to the varying peoples and cultures in the world.

More so, seeing the world through different people's eyes helps you become more tolerant, more accepting, and understanding, which means you can approach people easily to learn about their cultures and build a relationship with them from there.

Some people fail to achieve this moment when they travel because they still see the world through a single perspective (theirs). When they travel, they come back without stories about how they connected with other people. When you visit places, be open to view the world from different lenses and enjoy the process.

Yes, this is important because you need such improved communication skills to retain your relationships' essence. Some people who struggle with communication skills haven't been exposed to different people as such when they meet new people they don't know how to express themselves.

But the more you travel, interact with new people and encounter new cultures, the easier it is for you to communicate more effectively. You will know how to speak to people across different cultures and relate with people such that they feel comfortable around you.

Someone once said that "Traveling opens the mind," and I couldn't agree more: a person who travels has a more empowered and enhanced mind. With such a mind, you can speak anywhere and connect with people anywhere, which is crucial for nurturing relationships.

If you feel like you are not very confident and you also haven't been traveling a lot, then it is time to change that by becoming proactive with traveling. The more traveling, the more confident you will become because traveling helps you see beyond your small view of the world.

## TRAVELING ENABLES CONSISTENT EDUCATION

You learn more about people, cultures, and societies when you travel such that when you come back from your trips, you are willing to share your experiences. When you speak, you will have stories to tell, and people will listen in amazement at your tales of adventure (all of these will boost your confidence).

You cannot enjoy nor experience new cultures when you are not curious about the world nor its peoples. If you have that sense of wonder and curiosity, it will always propel you to enjoy traveling. Some people who struggle with loving travel happen to lack interest and a sense of wonder about the world, which keeps them isolated. For such persons, they don't have to move around or travel because they are content with their place.

Now you are wondering. "How can I become curious about the world?" You can do that by being open to exploring the world. Reading about new places, having discussions about traveling to new places, and interacting more with people who have visited all of these will spark a curiosity within you, which will also enable a commitment to adventure.

While it is excellent to travel alone and discover new places on your own sometimes. It is also much more fun when you go with family and friends, especially since you are on a quest to build better relationships. Traveling with friends and family helps you build treasured memories that will remain with you all and bring you closer to each other.

Now when traveling with others, you will want to plan with everyone's schedule in mind, so it is easier to get everyone on the same page. Build anticipation for the trip, and you can also travel with those you may have a strained relationship with but want to build on it and get it better.

Yes, we are talking about traveling and exploring new cultures, but this doesn't mean you should go just anywhere: you've got to visit places of



interest. For example, instead of going somewhere familiar, how about visiting a new fun site? If you are traveling with your kids, spouse, parents, or loved ones, you will want to ensure that the trip allows you to bond well.

This realization is one reason you must be intentional with planning as you have to settle for places that will excite you all, help you relax, and encourage a heightened relationship between you and those on the trip. If you are a step-parent to young kids and you want to bond with them because you feel there is a bit of strain in the relationship, why not visit Disney Land together?

Now, if you may not be a fan of Disney land but because the purpose of the trip is to help you connect with your step kids and build a better relationship with them, you must do something they like. From that trip, the relationship between you and your step kids will get better because you took them to a place of immense interest.

## PLANNING IS CRUCIAL

To get the best out of traveling and enjoying numerous trips, you've got to plan ahead of time. When you plan, you build anticipation for the journey, especially if you go with friends and family. Plan your itinerary, the places you will visit, and the activities you will enjoy while on the trip. Planning also keeps you organized, and this is crucial if you are moving with a large group of people.

Another great way of getting the best out of the trips is to immerse yourself in the cultures of the places you visit. Building relationships are akin to traveling: when you go to a new home, you forget about where you are coming from and devote time to learn more about this new place.

The illustration above applies to build new relationships: you have to immerse yourself in another person so that you get to know a lot about the individual. You see that traveling isn't just about the fun you will enjoy while on the trip; it also teaches you how to maximize relationships.

Immerse yourself in the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and all they do to identify with this new group. When you come back from such trips, you will do better with your relationships because you know how to pay attention to others (this is so important).

You are traveling because of discovery: you want to know more and use it to connect with others. As such, you must ask questions while on the trip to come back with information about the trip.

Please get to know more about the people you meet, their way of life, and every other information that will help you embrace the new cultures you experience.

Photos, videos, and social media posts are the new ways people can document their travel experience. Documenting your travel experiences

with friends helps you retain the memories such that you and your travel partners can always revisit those moments and relive the experience.

In chapter ten, we discussed how you should spend time with people more than staying indoors. One of the ways you can enjoy other people's company is by sharing memories on your trips to different places. While anticipating the next trip, how about a girl's night out where you all talk about the previous ones?

If you travel with your kids or spouses, you can discuss those moments you documented and foster better communication.

To maximize your traveling experience and enjoy the trip, you can converse with someone else who has traveled to your desired destination before. You can start a conversation with someone and build a relationship with him/her using this technique. Inform the individual that you intend to travel to the place, and you will need some pointers as to how to enjoy the trip.

Some people complain about being socially awkward and cannot strike up a stranger because they don't know what to say. But through talks about traveling, you can do just that because people love to talk about their vacation.

To build a better relationship with your superior at work, you can find out where he likes to travel to when on vacation. If you discover that he goes to Africa, you can ask him questions about Africa and set the tone for a discussion. This tip will help you in two ways: to connect better with others and get information on how to enjoy your trip.

When you travel with friends, family, or go alone, remember to observe your surroundings and respect the cultures you encounter. In most cases, you will be meeting new people who have a different set of values from what you are used to; thus, you must be aware of being respectful.

You don't want to have unpleasant trips because some people in the new places you visited were hostile to you. Additionally, being observant helps

you grasp as much information as possible about the new places you visit, impacting your overall experience positively.

Lastly, you've got to travel as much as you can because this is how you can make it a part of your routine. If you have financial constraints, I suggest that you plan your trips ahead of time and take advantage of discounts with airlines to get the best prices.

People who travel a lot have the most fun stories to tell, and this is great for conversation starters: you will never feel like you don't know what to say when you walk up to someone. The more you travel, the excited you become about all the beautiful places you want to visit, which affects the entire mood while on the trip.

Get curious about visiting new continents, cities, states, and countries: you will love the experience and bask in the feel of discovering new places, people, and cultures.

Can I give you a high five at this point? You have completed the process, and I am very proud of your progress. You started this journey learning about being happy and building a good foundation with the concept of positivity, and now here you are learning how to travel the world.

So I say well done, but there is one more section you must read through to complete the process. In the next section (conclusion), you will find insightful comments on how to take action with all you've learned. Let's round off this experience on an inspiring note, shall we?



## CONCLUSION

You have stayed true to the process and the journey: I commend your commitment to learning, unlearning, and relearning vital concepts about building relationships. When some people think about relationships, it is easy for them to assume that it is a trivial concept, but with all you have learned thus far, I believe you have discovered the truth about having such people skills.

This book aims to empower you with practical information on how you can build bridges towards people in every area of your life. It has often been said that it is impossible to achieve balance with every relationship you nurture, and I hope that this book has countered such erroneous ideas.

With all you have learned thus far, you now know that it is not difficult to achieve balance, especially when you understand the dynamics of the relationships. Every relationship is different, so we advised in chapter ten that you spend more time with others: the more time you spend with your friends, partner, kids, or parents, the more attention you can give to each relationship.

We couldn't have had a comprehensive and detailed material if we didn't talk about emotional intelligence. It is a vital idea that keeps you aware and in charge of your emotions. An emotionally intelligent individual will know how to resolve conflict positively, and this also means he/she would mumble less and laugh more.

On this journey, we elaborated on the importance of intentional communication, which entails picking up your phone and using digital platforms to keep in touch with others. Now you know how not to take things personally while avoiding the pitfall of jumping into conclusion. Traveling and experiencing other cultures are vital concepts that keep you connected and aware of people beyond your immediate reach.

We covered so many ideas on the concept of cultivating relationships such that you have received all the essential information needed to maximize your people skills. It is safe to say that I have attained "Mission accomplished" in helping you solve the dilemma of building stronger relationships with people.

From being curious at the introductory section and wondering how you will get things right with others, you have experienced an increase in knowledge. Now you know what to do to be highly likable and charismatic, and you also know how to become intentional with people because there is nothing passive about relationships.

As we round off this journey here and bring your reading experience to a close, I want to help you unlearn some ideas you may have considered "Normal" in the past. My views are in three folds: The concept of a conclusion, the power of execution and the depth of sustenance

The first idea relates to the fact that when most people read, they anticipate the concluding section of the book, and when they get there, they read it in a rush and drop the book. After keeping the book, they forget about all they learned and move on to the next material.

But the concluding section is not the END of the learning experience: on the contrary, it is the beginning. At this stage, you have concluded your reading experience, but instead of dropping the book off, you need to ask, "What do I do next?"

That question brings us to point number two; the power of execution. We live in a digitally-enabled world where access to information is at the tap of our fingers. So if we all have easy access to information, how come people still struggle with cultivating healthy relationships? The answer is in the fact that we have so many readers and few doers.

If you don't execute what you learn or implement solutions, you won't make progress. The concluding section should mark your implementation

process as you start working on the ideas shared thus far. But does it end with implementation? Of course not!

The third idea is on the depth of sustenance, and how important it is to maintain the new level of connection you will achieve with your relationships. Yes, you've read the book, yes you've gone beyond the conclusion, and you are executing it, but how about maintenance? It's like buying a big beautiful home, at first, you will marvel at its beauty, but over time, if you don't maintain it, it will become unappealing.

Even as we round off at this point, be reminded that the book's value lies in what you do with the ideas shared thus far. This material is not a "Feel good" manual neither is it a work of fiction: we are dealing with real issues that pertain to real life. As such, if you don't use what you've learned, you will only "know" how to cultivate relationships but wouldn't "Experience" what it feels like to have such affiliations.

Remember to love yourself, be happy with who you are, and become positive with your experiences. Without these personal expressions, you cannot build a great relationship with other people. It all begins with you; hence, the first chapter of this book focuses on you!

Whatever you are on the inside will reflect how you relate to other people: this is so important! Don't be the one who knows so much about everything but doesn't do so much with everything. Be the one who knows, acts, and remains consistent with the process. You can enjoy being around people and investing in relationships, but it all begins with the first steps you take right now,

Now it's your turn!





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# DECLUTTER YOUR MIND

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ORGANIZE YOUR MIND TO LEAD A PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF  
SUCCESS

*“You’ll never get organized if you don’t have a vision for your life.”*

*Linda L. Eubanks*





## INTRODUCTION

Do you frequently feel like there is too much going on in your life that keeping up with all of it is stressful and tiring? Are these happenings limiting your productivity levels to a point where you can't fulfill your otherwise normal routine? An examination of the cause of this problem that has faced you will reveal that you have so much baggage in your mind and life that it overwhelms you. What you need to do when this scenario arises is to declutter your mind. You need to get rid of the excess that is weighing you down and focus on what is important to you in your life.

You can make this possible for your life by decluttering. Decluttering your life is one of the key elements of a minimalist lifestyle.

Right now, minimalism is a lifestyle that everyone is yearning to achieve. It is a lifestyle that helps you get rid of all the unnecessary things that are bringing stress to your life.

As a minimalist, you dedicate your life to living on only what you need to live comfortably and keeping all the things that are not important to your life away from you.

It is possible for you to take on too much in your life and barely have time to keep up with all of it. I was a victim of this way of living a few years back before minimalism saved me. Having a lot of work to do was a way of making myself feel important. I thought that if I wanted to make an impact in life, I needed to have a lot of things going on at the same time in my life. This way I would ensure that I had no time to lazy about and that I would be able to do a lot, at least that is what I thought.

I was taking on too much in my life that I had no time for myself. It was hard to keep up with everything and after some time I became a working robot. Everything I was doing was not personal to me anymore, I was just doing it to get it done. This means that I was not giving it my all. I was not performing these tasks to the best of my ability; I was just doing it to mark

the task as complete. This was a disservice to myself because deep down I knew that I could do better.

By taking on too much I had no time to perfect my skills. So, all my work was just satisfactory and not well done. And with time I was convinced that I was not good enough for anything.

In my head, I had categories of people, those that are perfect at everything they do and those that do not get things right. I put myself in the latter category because of the number of times my work was sent back to me due to it being unsatisfactory.

It was when I had my encounter with minimalism that I was able to know my worth. My first goal was to declutter my life and get rid of all my baggage.

In this book, I am going to walk you through your decluttering journey. You are going to understand the importance of decluttering to your life and how to go about it to make it an enjoyable process.

From my decluttering journey, I realized that you cannot declutter your whole life in a day. It is a journey that needs time and patience.

The first thing I suggest you do is to tune your mindset to understand that decluttering is good for you. When I started decluttering, I thought that the only way to do it was to dive in and go 'cold turkey'.

Well was I wrong! I found myself attached to so many of my possessions and life routines. I started convincing myself that I needed them all which in itself did not help my decluttering process.

Then the process was tiring. Imagine sorting through so many boxes and other things in my house in one day. I was so tired by the end of the day and my mindset was that decluttering is a brutal and tiring process that I will not be doing again.

I became negative about it and all times I read and thought about it, my mind would take me back to how tired I was the previous time I tried it.

And that was when I was decluttering my possessions. It was twice as hard when I was doing away with the extra activities in my life.

I found it impossible to let them go because they were what gave me a purpose in my life. I felt that letting go would mean I was not reliable anymore. That people would no longer count on me.

But I came to an understanding that decluttering is a process that requires patience and a good attitude. You cannot dive into it if your attitude is wrong.

I have tried decluttering with no patience and the wrong attitude and I know how it affects the whole cause negatively. This is not only a physical process but also an emotional one. I remember the self-talks I gave myself not to go and pick up something that I had gotten rid of. Everything in our lives has an emotional attachment to us. It is understandable when letting go of these items becomes hard.

This book is going to help you have an easy and fun decluttering experience. All the advice you will get from it will give you the strength you need to keep going and to make sure you come out of this with only what you need to live comfortably.

Once I was done decluttering my life, I literally felt lighter. There was nothing wearing me down anymore. I was free to focus on myself and work on growing my skills. My mind always felt fresh and I could now have clear thoughts and perform better.

The feeling is exciting. I can promise you that. I was now working on what I wanted and I discovered a lot of things about myself that were buried under all the baggage I previously had in my life.

The main advantage of decluttering is that it is going to give you your life back. As long as you are entertaining a lot of things that are not important you are not living your life for yourself. What you are doing is living your life to accommodate them. And decluttering will help you change that.

It will be living in vain if you do not live your own life by your own terms and discover your true potential. You have to do this for you now. Nobody is going to show you what you are capable of if you do not go out and find it for yourself. And you will not get it if you have a lot of things in your way keeping you from discovering yourself.

Have an open mind and the yearning to discover how this concept of decluttering is going to give you your life back as you read on. It is good that you have made this choice as a step to better your life. This book will be your guide, you will get useful tips and steps on how to declutter your life.



## HAVE A DAILY SCHEDULE TO DECLUTTER YOUR DAY



There is a false perception in life that we are made accustomed to from a young age. It is that you can only be successful if you are dedicating each minute of your time to working.

I am sure you have seen and heard from “successful people” who turn into motivational speakers and brag about how packed their diary is. They constantly talk about how they have a tight schedule to a point where they have little or no free time. Most of them will brag about their overbooked days and how it has made them who they are.

This is a false perception. There is no need to fill yourself up with so much to do that, in the end, you are not able to enjoy the fruits of your labor. You will be working in vain if you cannot enjoy the success you have gathered for yourself.

Do not fall into the trap of only feeling fulfilled when you pick up three shifts at your place of work so you work all day. Being busy all day should not be your sense of validation. It should not be what makes you think that you are successful.

Society has been commissioned to respect a man who works hard all day and night with barely any break. Such men are held in high regard and nobody questions their lack of commitment to the most important things in life like their families. Their success is highly praised because everyone believes they earned it.

But a successful man with an evenly stretched out schedule is rarely respected. Their success is there but it is not praised as is the man with a full schedule. Society will have such a man believe that he is not attaining his full potential because there are many hours in his day that he is not working.

With this perception, you will only make use of your full potential when you are working back to back with barely any resting time in between your tasks. But this is all wrong. Your success is only going to be relevant if you are in the right mental space to conduct all of these activities.

Overworking yourself will take away the personalization of what you are doing. You will not be invested in your actions and all you will be doing is working to get the next item on your schedule complete.

Contrary to common belief, working like this will not allow you to reach your full potential. Because you do not have enough time to deeply think about the next task and to prepare the best work plan to get the job done.

Learn to say no when you do not have enough time on your schedule to fit in another item. Do not always feel obligated to pick up extra tasks just so people can see you are a reliable person. It does not work like that. Let the tasks easily fit into your well stretched out schedule. Do not stress yourself out just to please others at your expense.

It is okay to include rest time and leisure activities into your schedule. Things that will bring you relaxation and set your mind at ease. This will ensure that you will be in the right mental space to perform more duties later.

Starting your day will become easier when your schedule is not filled with a lot of tasks to complete. Each time you have a congested schedule your mind will get tired even before you embark on the first task. Because all you need to do in the day is too much for you and you have no idea how

you are going to deliver. Your mind already anticipates the fatigue that will come on later in the day and manifests this early on in the morning.

It is way easier to start your day with a manageable schedule. A manageable schedule has tasks that you can easily complete in a day and not be worked out. It has factored in enough time to work on each activity and has rest times. This kind of schedule allows you to be energetic as you face each task.

And when you have a manageable schedule you will start your day off with confidence. There will be no fear of having to cancel on certain things because you cannot complete the task within the stated time.

As a young man starting my career many years ago, I was so pumped and eager to put in all my hard work so I would become a millionaire. I promised myself never to sleep for more than four hours a day and to be the guy at the office who always picked up an extra task. To me, this was the perfect way to get noticed by my bosses. I wanted them to think of me as the guy that is always there to get things done.

Within one year I had managed to fill up my schedule with a lot of tasks. Some of which I had no idea how to perform. And obviously, at the office, everyone thought I knew how to do it because I took up the task anyway.

I was also taking up other tasks in my social life as a way of being there for my family and friends. I was the uncle who promised his nephew to be there for his football game and his niece that he would take her ice skating while still having a bucketload of work-related tasks to complete.

It was not easy keeping this up. I ended up consuming too much coffee to keep me awake and functioning every day. Because I was too exhausted to do anything normally minus the additional boost I got from coffee. My mind and body needed rest. But I thought that if I rested, I would end up lazy and would not become successful.



Confusion kicked into my life and I started even triple booking clients at the same hour. Most of them dropped me and went with my colleagues because they did not like my disorganized way of working. My bosses did not like the quality of my work and I was always late for everything because I was trying to complete the previous task. My overstretched schedule came back to haunt me.

Depression set in when I realized that I was working as hard as I could to become successful but nothing was working. I saw myself as a failure. That nothing good could come from me.

But reading about minimalism from a short 500-word blog gave me back my life. I read from that short article that your life will only be successful if you are constantly working with what you need.

There was a short paragraph that touched on decluttering and how you do not need to have so much to be validated. I did more research on this and understood that I did not need to have back to back commitments for me to have success.

All the things I was forcing myself to do were just taking away my energy and not bringing any positivity into my life. I needed to declutter my life and schedule so I would fulfill my purpose and attain my full potential.

This short blog, with the minimalist information it contained, was the kickstart I needed to better my life.

## HAVE A MORNING ROUTINE

How you wake up in the morning will determine your day. Just like how nutritionists stress the importance of breakfast so will I stress the importance of waking up well. Set a positive foundation for your day when you wake up. Have a routine of activities you can indulge in that will uplift your spirit.

It is good to have the same waking up time every day. Your designated wake up time should be followed by the other activities that lift your spirits. You can meditate, pray, exercise, do some yoga, listen to some soothing music, cook a meal, or read a chapter of your current book. These activities should make your mind alert and get you ready to face your day.

You will find yourself achieving more in a day because you woke up right. Your energy and confidence for the day will be boosted.

Another thing you can do is look at your schedule and internalize the activities you have for the day. Set a positive attitude towards them and come up with a plan on how you are going to move through each activity in your day. This will make your mind ready to tackle the events that the day holds.

## TAKE ON ENOUGH

Have enough on your plate every day. Enough means that your plate is not underserved or overflowing. Ensure that you are not taking on too little and at the same time you are keen to see that you do not have too much going on.

This is where your no and yes come into play. Say yes to the important tasks. Let them take priority. But do not feel obligated to say yes to all important tasks when you do not have time to get to all of them done. Delegate work to other people that have the time and resources to work on them.

Say no to tasks that you cannot handle because your schedule is already full. Do not seek validation from an overbooked day. But be validated by seeing that the work you are doing is giving good results.

It is okay to cancel on activities you genuinely thought you would be able to attend to but find out it will be impossible. Reschedule these tasks for a later date when you have the time for them.

I do not mean that you should now be a person who is always canceling on plans. Only cancel tasks where you honestly cannot attend to them. But work on ensuring your schedule is always well planned with only tasks you can perform so that you do not find yourself in situations where you constantly cancel on plans.

## APPRECIATE THAT YOU CANNOT DO EVERYTHING

Do not feel bad about this. We all have 24 hours in a day. You are not obligated to dedicate all your time to perform different tasks. It is okay not to be able to do everything. Take pride in this. By doing this, you will be dedicated to that which you can do.

Declutter your schedule to fit in with your time. It is okay to want to be the superhero of the day and to perform as many tasks as you can in a day. But appreciate that you have limited resources available to you. One of them is time. Some things cannot fit into your time. And it is okay to let go of them and to pick them up at a time you will be ready to work on them.

Declutter your schedule so it can only have what you can work on for a particular period of time. And to make sure you are not being overworked.

## HAVE A PLANNER/ DIARY

I suggest that you keep a diary or have a planner. This is an important tool in making sure you are set and organized for your day. Your planner/diary should contain your schedule. It should have all your day's activities and the time you are supposed to perform them.

Do not make your diary your enemy because looking at it feels like a death sentence. Before I decluttered my life, I hated my diary. It always had so many things for me to do. And no matter how hard I tried to move things around it was impossible to organize it.

Most of my activities would get lost in my diary because there was so much to be done. I was drowning in my own mess of filling up my day. But when I decluttered my life, I decided to make my diary my guide.

I always referred to it to make sure I was free at the time I was factoring in an activity. And because it is hard to always open up a book every time you are checking on your availability, I downloaded a planner application. It is always in line with my diary as both of them are always up to date. When I do not have my diary book with me, I open my planner app to check on my availability. And immediately I get to my diary, I key in the new task.

My diary and planner help me visualize my day. Where I feel there is too much going on, I either delegate the work to someone else or call to reschedule an activity for another day.

I always know what I have planned for a particular day, prior to the day so I can prepare for it.

## ASK FOR HELP

Life can get overwhelming sometimes and it is okay to ask for help. Every successful person in life has asked for help at a particular point in their journey. And they will testify to how the help they got gave them an opportunity helped them to focus on the most important tasks.

Most times a successful person is successful because of the works of their assistant. The assistant gives you the opportunity to stick to your priorities while he/she works on the other items and brings you more opportunities for success.

This is why the PA to a successful person is his/her personal confidence. They are people that know how to perform like their bosses and to close deals and bring back success when tasked to do so.

When I got promoted at work, I initially did not like the idea of having an assistant. I felt like I was comfortable enough to handle all my business alone. I was all the company needed to get the work done. But I thank God the office stuck me with Mart. I took him with me when I resigned and started my own company. We are now two wheels in a wonderful machine.

Mart was able to handle all tasks I designated to him and bring back even better results than if I had done them. The human mind is conditioned to perform better at priority tasks and to give substantial results at activities that are not a priority. But any work I gave Mart became his priority so he had to bring in the best results. Which he did and he is now a valuable asset in my life.

You may not have a Mart but there are many people in your life that have the ability to perform different tasks for you and bring you good results. Delegate the tasks to them so you can declutter your schedule and work on other things. And to make sure you are not overworked at the end of the day. This greatly impacts your productivity positively.

## SET INFORMATION LIMITS

Everyone has a thirst to learn something new that will better their lives and bring growth. I know you do too. But too much information is detrimental to your life. There are certain times in your day when you will have taken in too much already to a point where you will not know what to do with the information and you need time to rest so that your mind gets a chance to relax.

Consuming a lot of information creates noise in our heads. You will not even be able to internalize and make use of anything you have learned because there is so much information in your head.

Declutter your daily schedule so you can have some time to yourself to rest effectively. A time when you will not be taking in any information and your brain has space to rest. Take this time to indulge in your hobbies. Your mind should be at ease too and not trying to figure out a lot of stuff.

As you rest, your mind will internalize the information that you had taken in and you will find yourself making use of it in your life.

Your life will have meaning when you accept to do that which you can. Do not feel the burden of having to break your back so your efforts can be seen. Work on the quality of your work so your end results speak for themselves. Have enough time for each task to ensure you are making the most of it.





## GO DIGITAL BUT KEEP YOUR DIGITAL LIFE MINIMAL

**O**n your journey to decluttering your life, you may find it hard to declutter items that have sentimental value to you. Like your child's first coloring or drawing. These items may have been in your life for a short time but they have somehow managed to dig their roots deep in your heart.

Even though getting rid of them is hard it is a much-needed step to create space for yourself and for important things in your life. During your decluttering journey, it is wise to keep an open mind. Be actively there for the process and look out for what you have to learn.

The world has gone digital. To some level this allows you to get rid of physical items and store them digitally.

There is no need to feel bad about doing away your son's or daughter's first painting because you can take a good picture of it and store it on your devices. By doing this, you do not have the physical item filling your space. And you still have the photo in your picture files to look at and remember the sweet memories.

Going digital can be done in many aspects of your life too. That is the advantage of the digital world. It has been developed to fit all sectors of our lives because there is a website or application to deal with it.

You no longer need to have a physical newspaper, now you can have an online subscription where you receive an email with the newspaper. All you need to do is open the email, download the newspaper and read it. You no longer have to worry about where the paper will go after reading it. Because it is on your phone. You may opt to store it in the archives for later referral or you can delete it.

This saves you space. It may be hard to toss away physical papers from your space so the online version of the paper saves you from this stress. Physical newspapers often cause untidiness, the online versions have come

in to prevent this. And now that you have the paper in your device you can take it anywhere and read it anytime.

If you can do this with your newspaper so can you with your letters, magazines, books and so forth. Subscribe to their respective online platforms and have these items delivered to you online where you can have them with you at all times without necessarily cluttering up your space.

But even as you store things online remember to have a minimal digital life. Avoid cluttering your digital life by having so much going on in it. The physical weight you feel from having tangible clutter is the same physical weight you will feel from having online clutter. There will be a lot for you to handle and care for and so much will need your attention and keeping up may be a problem.

Keep it short. Have only what you need. There is no need for you to subscribe to everything or to have so many applications. If you do not need it then do not have it. You will achieve minimalism in your life if everything is kept to the measure of your needs.

## DECLUTTER DOCUMENTS

Go through all the documents that you have. Start with the physical ones. Get rid of all letters, magazines, and books that you do not need anymore. You can gift books or sell them. But do not keep them if you do not need them.

These items are good cluttering agents. They will just sit in the corner you have placed them and gather a lot of dust. And dust is harmful to your health.

What is important should be kept. Or try finding a digital alternative for it. I always scan important letters so I can have them online. It is easy storage and the document is with me at all times when I need it. If there is a book I have read and may want to read again in the future I either keep the book or find a kindle version. This allows me to have the book in my online storage and the paperback can be sold or gifted to someone else.

After sorting out the physical proceed to your online documents. What is in there? What do you find in your online storage? Do you have five thousand emails waiting for you to get to them? Are there some documents you downloaded a while back and have never really opened them? You should declutter them.

Go document by document. Do not feel the need to keep it because it is in online storage and is not filling your physical space. It may not be filling your physical space but it is impacting your mind. You are storing all this bulk in your mind and creating congestion in it. Declutter.

I highly suggest you look into all the documents. Open each file to see what the document is about and analyze if you need it or not. It is risky to just delete documents without knowing what they contain. Sometimes when I am decluttering, I even find documents I forgot I had but are of great

importance. Go through each document, you never know just what you will find.

After deleting the unwanted documents, you should backup the important documents that you are keeping. This will make them accessible to you on whichever device you want to access them from. And you can free up your phone space. If the document is backed up you can find it when you search for it from your cloud or google backup depending on the software you use.

I find decluttering your backup is also very important. Before adding new things to it remind yourself what is in there. If it is no longer a need then delete it. One of the major risks of having too much backed up is that you will take a long time to find a document that you need.

It is also important to organize your important documents. Have different categories for everything to make it easier to locate a document. It will be easier to go straight to a document you need than to scroll through hundreds of them before you can find it. I know you can use the search button. But categories will help you narrow down your search scope.

## SORT YOUR PICTURES

In this digital era, people rarely print out pictures anymore. If you have printouts you should consider changing these pictures to online photos. They can be scanned and stored in your online photo platform.

This way they do not clutter your physical space. Also, pictures from a long time ago tend to start getting ruined. Scanning them will help you have a clear copy of the picture before it becomes worse and you cannot tell who or what is in the picture.

Then look into the pictures on your digital devices. How many do you have? And how many do you need? Sometimes when we take pictures of something, we tend to take more than we need. I am guilty of this. The perfect shot must be taken no matter how many shots we need to take to get it.

But you need to delete the other pictures you do not need and remain with your perfect shots. The blurry shots of the pictures can be deleted. I find it easier to store my pictures online so I can have space for other things on my phone.

Pictures and videos take a lot of space. And I need to store other things on my phone. Storing them in my backup makes them accessible at all times without them filling my phone storage.

I also organize my storage into different categories to make it easier to find what I want. Instead of scrolling through all pictures taken in 2018, to find my son's birthday photos I can just search for the birthday folder and find the pictures easily.

Technology is here to help us live life better and easier. It will only happen if you take advantage of everything that will ease your life.

## MANAGE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

The world has become a global village. It is possible to get in touch with anyone living at any place in the world. And you can talk to them at all times. Emails are sent instantly. Wired money gets to the recipient almost immediately if not immediately and texts and messages are received as soon as you click send.

This is a positive thing technology has done. Everyone is just a phone call or a click away. No need to write a really long letter to your friend living in another part of the world and hoping it will get to them.

My parents told me stories of many letters that got lost in the mail. My dad would tell the stories with a slight tone of disappointment because he took his time to write the letter just for a mailman to lose it.

And the good thing is all these modern digital ways are safe and secure. Nobody will steal your money as you wire it to someone. Your messages will be sent without them getting lost. And all information will reach its intended recipient in time.

Social media has made us stay connected to our loved ones. Ties are not broken anymore because of distance and staying for long periods without talking to each other. Right now, we are all connected and can speak at any time.

But as good as social media is, it also has its own demerits. And overindulging in it will make the demerits more than the merits. The moment you overindulge in social media and lose touch with the real world then you become a slave to it.

These days we have all become social on social media but antisocial in person. It is easier to carry a conversation with someone online and have nothing to say to each other in person.

Everyone is subscribed to many apps and trying to keep up with them. It is so much work for one person with 24 hours in his/her day and other tasks to attend to. We have all fallen into the trap of following everyone the world thinks are important on Twitter and Instagram and have no time to see the important post from important people in our lives because there is so much to scroll through.

You do not need to follow everyone. Unfollow all people that you do not need in your life and stick to the ones you need. I am sure that one of the core functions of social media is to connect you to your loved ones. This will be lost if you will be focusing your time on other people and being interested in what they are doing in their life instead of being invested in your family and friends' lives.

Having so many people to keep up with will shift your attention from the important. My mother always gets angry when I do not like a picture she posted on Facebook. Even if she sent me the same quote on WhatsApp I still have to go back and like it on Facebook. If I have so many people that I am following, their posts make it impossible to get to my mom's post.

There is no need to have an account on all social media platforms. My sons think I am old school because I do not have a TikTok account. In the future, they will understand that I did not need the account so there was no reason to sign up. Besides, I find people reposting their TikTok videos on Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. If I can see them there what is the use for the account?

Declutter your following list and the social media platforms you are on. Stick to following the few impossible people and keep your social media life minimal.

## UNSUBSCRIBE

There are many newsletters, YouTube channels, and other forums that I subscribed to at some point in my life and right now I do not need their content. What I do in such an instance is unsubscribe from them. These subscriptions send notifications all the time and I never have time to get to them because I do not need the content.

I find it fair to the content creator if I unsubscribe and create room for them to be left with their dedicated followers.

If you do not want to unsubscribe then regulate the notifications. You can set your subscription to be one where you do not receive a notification every time. Like on YouTube you can turn off the notification bell so you are not notified about new videos.



## DECLUTTER YOUR APPS

You do not need to have all apps from the app store on your phone. Yes, it looks nice and somewhat prestigious but there is no need to have such a large number of meaningless apps.

I suggest that you should not download an app if you don't need it. All these apps will send notifications and you will need to open so many tabs to get to some information. So, let it go.

Just have the apps you need to live your life comfortably. I usually use the free subscription time of an app if I am not sure if I need it or not. If I need it then I keep it. If not then I delete it. There is no in-between. This helps to reduce the activities happening on my phone so I can get to the important ones fast.

And the good thing is I can always reinstall an app when it becomes important to me. There is no obligation to keep it until then. I will get it when I need it.

Do not follow a trend and have an app on your phone that will clutter your phone. Keep your distance from it and have a good time enjoying the apps that you need.

## SAVES YOU TIME AND MONEY

Decluttering your life and going digital will save you time and money. You will no longer have to move through a lot to get to what you want. Your digital storage and physical life will have a clear organization because you have remained with only what you need.

Decluttering your apps will save you time because you do not have to keep up with all of them. There is no need to keep up active conversations with the same people on all apps. Stick to one app that can provide all the services you need.

Then you will save money because you will not have to pay the subscription fees to the app. Some apps have subscription fees. And if you have an online shopping problem you will not be tempted by the adverts that often pop up on most of the apps. You will limit your exposure to such apps and be able to curb your addiction.

The most important benefit that you will get from this is that you will be able to reconnect with what is important. Even if you think you have the willpower to stop yourself from falling captive to all these apps it is important to keep away from them. You will not know when you became addicted. Keep away from them to avoid this from happening.

Decluttering your life is a process that needs discipline especially in the digital sector. Becoming an addict of anything online is really easy. And you are facing the risk of not having the digital space as your helper. It can become your captor and not let you do the important things. This will only happen if you allow yourself to fall victim to its addictive clutches.

Free yourself from this and organize your life now.



## FREE YOURSELF FROM DEBT

**D**ecluttering your life means doing away with everything that you do not need. Your life will only be comfortable if you are constantly supplying yourself with your needs while doing away with other things that do not matter. These needless items that do not matter bring baggage into your life and cause you stress and other negative outcomes.



Debt is one of these things you do not need in life. Instead, what you need in your life is financial freedom. And you can only attain financial freedom once you take away all the liabilities in your life. As you take out the liabilities you have to fill your life with valuable assets and put yourself in a position where you can grow your existing assets.

The process of taking out liabilities is like changing your habits from bad to good. When you eliminate bad habits from your life and do not fill up the space they left with good things then you create a vacuum. And anything can fill this vacuum.

Mostly what will come in is what you are accustomed to and that is the previous bad habits you had just eliminated. And this time the bad habits will be worse because mentally, you will be drained and swamped by the unfortunate resignation that you can't get rid of your bad habits.

To carefully and effectively get rid of a bad habit you need to teach yourself good habits. This ensures that your life is occupied with something else and has no room to accommodate bad habits. So as the bad goes out the good is coming in to replace it.

This is the reason why recovering drug addicts relapse. It is dangerous for them to give up drugs and have no new life purpose. What they will be doing is creating a void in their life. After they have successfully quit drugs their life will have no meaning and purpose. They will often fall back to the habits they are used to.

When you are eliminating debt, you have to teach yourself the habit of not incurring additional debt. You cannot pay off what you already owe while you are still taking out more loans. Your life has to become one of only purchasing what you can afford and not going beyond that by dealing with what you cannot afford.

By this, I mean that you should learn how to live within your means.

## LIVING WITHIN YOUR MEANS

When you live your life within your means you are going to be able to eliminate debt because what you cannot afford does not bother you.

As a young man on a mission to get his career on the road I was constantly disturbed by things I could not afford. It broke my heart each time I looked at the price of something a friend had. I actually felt like my life was disadvantaged because my pay could not allow me to afford them.

Instead of accepting my life as it was, I started maxing out my credit cards and taking loans from people so that I could afford these items. And my reason for wanting them was so my friends could see me as an equal to them financially. I went to extreme lengths to get accepted by people.

There were days I slept hungry because I wasted my pay buying things that I did not need just to please others. I was the man with the latest iPhone but an eviction notice on my door because I did not make the rent in time. Even my landlord could not believe I was broke because of the clothes I wore and the lifestyle I led.

My mind was never at ease and I was constantly looking over my shoulder for fear of any of my debtors coming to collect. Actually, within a short time, I started borrowing from Peter to pay Paul then borrowing from Paul again to pay back Peter. I was in a debt cycle and I needed to set myself free.

When I came across minimalism, I found peace. It was as if someone was telling me that it was okay not to be able to afford these things. That all that was important was for me to fulfill my needs. And I was relieved. Even though I still had a lot of debt to pay back I was happy that my life had been liberated from the constant need to fulfill a life that I could not finance.

I made payment plans with all my debtors on how I would pay back their money. My idea was to pay back the small debts first. This way I

would be motivated to continue and pay off the bigger debts.

In life, if you start off by completing the easier tasks you will build your experience and confidence to help you handle the bigger tasks.

It was a refreshing feeling to finish off paying someone. Then I would use the money I was spending to pay them to offset another debt. It took me a few years to rid myself entirely of debt. And during this time, I became focused on other things in life and started to grow. My success became inevitable when I turned the focus of my life to what was meaningful to me.

## SPEND TIME ON EXPERIENCES

It is better to choose an experience rather than purchasing material possessions. If you live your life by constantly buying everything you set your eyes on you will never attain your financial freedom. Everyone should be working towards their financial freedom. You should want to liberate your life from the fear of receiving your bills.

There should not be times when you are wondering how you will finance your needs. Financial freedom means you have invested your money in assets that are bringing you more money and making your financial future secure.

Experiences are better and cheaper than material possessions. They do not fill the space in your home and cause congestion. All you take away from an experience are a few photos and memories.

The memories will be remembered and cherished. They will not clutter your home and life and will not cause you the stress of working to keep them comfortable. That is what clutter does. You work to keep these things that you do not need in your life comfortable instead of them keeping you comfortable.

Choosing an experience will help you cut back on material purchases or spending your money on ventures that are not worth it. As you declutter your life you need to make yourself satisfied and content with what you already have. And use it to make your life comfortable. You are working hard to supply your needs so make sure they make you comfortable.

What you do not have will come when the time is right. Not when you are forcing yourself to get it and becoming oblivious to what you actually need.

Looking back, I feel that when I was steering my life towards affording what I could not, I lived in captivity. Because I allowed the item to



hypnotize my life and have me feel like I would only have peace when I have it.

## SHOPPING HABITS

The idea is to eliminate debt at all costs. Looking into your shopping habits will help you be intentional with your purchases. Your lifestyle should be set towards your needs. You should be able to purchase your needs while forgoing other luxuries that are not important to you.

When I was living my life beyond my means I was more interested in the luxuries. I would walk into a store to buy items that I needed then get confused by other things that I did not need. These items were sold when I decluttered my life and I got part of the money I spent on them back.

I did not need these items. Most of them were never put to use. I fell for marketing ads that convinced me something would make life better while I knew it would not. Sales at stores excited me and I honestly felt like it was a must for me to purchase something when a sale came around. Even when I had nothing to buy.

It took a lot of maturity and understanding to understand that I did not have to purchase anything I did not need. I did not need to impress anyone by owning these items. The only person I needed to impress was myself by purchasing my needs.

I stopped maxing out my credit cards and became more intentional with my shopping. I always have a list of what I need when I go shopping and make sure to stick to my list. My lists have been upgraded to spreadsheets on my computer where I keep an inventory of everything I have. This makes it possible for me to note what I do not have.

Sticking to my needs while shopping has helped me save a lot of money. When I started paying off debts, the money I was saving was used towards offsetting those debts. And some amount was also used for investments in assets that helped me increase my income.

## INVESTING IN ASSETS

Assets are items that will always appreciate and increase in value. To make sure it keeps going up in its value you need to take care of it and make sure it is getting what it needs.

A piece of land is an asset. Its value will never go down. We have seen people who pay millions for desolate pieces of land that have been covered by overgrown bushes.

If you keep your piece of land in good condition it will fetch you more money. Not necessarily by selling it. You can go into real estate and construct a flat or apartment complexes. People looking for housing will love the beautiful houses and apartments that you have and they will want to rent with you.

You will be collecting the rent every month. See how your income went up? Nobody will hire you and pay you a billion dollars as your salary. If you want to grow and attain financial freedom you need to find other ways of making money and stop depending on your salary only. And the best way is to invest in assets.

An investment in an asset is like having your money working for you. Most people think that to earn more money they need to pick up an extra shift at work or get another better paying job. This is not true. What you need is to be able to invest in assets that will work for you.

## MONITOR YOUR EXPENSES

Look at what you are spending your money on. What is causing you to have debts? And how can you fix it? Most times what is causing you to fall further into debt is the luxuries that you do not need in your life. They are depleting your income and forcing you to take loans to be able to satisfy your needs.

Unless you know where your money is going you will not be able to do away with the debt. Because it will not be easy for you to point out where you are going wrong with your finances.

When you know how you are spending your money you will become more intentional with your spending. Your hard-earned money will not be wasted away on items or ventures that are not your needs. You will only be paying for your needs and have enough to pay off any debt you may have and to invest in assets.

## BUDGET

It is wise to know what your needs are and how much you will be spending to purchase them. Budgeting keeps you in check. It will help you stay within your means and not go beyond what you cannot afford.

I always have a budget for everything I need. What makes this easy for me is I always do my research on the price of every item I need to see its price range. Then I decide how much I will be spending on it. When I go to my preferred store of purchase, I only buy the best quality item in my budget price range. Never above. This helps me stay disciplined. We both know how easy it is to lose focus when in a store and to make purchases that are not needed.

It also helps to know what your needs are. Look into your life and see what you need to live your life comfortably. You will be able to ditch debt if you know what your money should be spent on. Because you will not be wasting your time and money on items that you do not need in your life to live comfortably.

## LIST DOWN YOUR DEBTS

Now that you are working to declutter your life and you are on the path to ditch the debt it will be wise to start by writing down what you owe people first. I suggest that you write down everyone that you owe money and how much you owe them.

Let your list start with the small debts as it builds up. Come back to your list and write how much you have been able to pay each time you make payments. I find it encouraging when I tick a debt as settled on my spreadsheet.

Sometimes paying off a loan can take you time. Maybe because you do not earn a lot from your job and you have other expenses. The list will help keep you accountable. And you will make a plan on how to settle all the debts in ways that do not compromise your day to day life.

Your list will also help you remember all your debts. We are human and are prone to forget. My children make fun of me because I make a list of everything I have. But I always remind them that the lists keep me accountable.

Debt is like cancer in your life and finances. It has a way of multiplying and controlling your financial life. First, all loans you take may have to be paid back with interest. Taking a loan already is growing the amount you have to pay because there is an interest rate attached to it.

Then once you take one loan for something you do not need it will be very easy for you to repeat it. Taking unnecessary debts will become a habit for you. You will end up taking another loan for something else that is not useful to you and then you will grow a habit of debt collection which impacts negatively on your life and reputation.

You need to ditch the debt in your life to set yourself free. Debt weighs you down and slows down your growth. This makes it clutter. Declutter it

from your life and enjoy your personal freedom and financial freedom.





## DECLUTTER YOUR SPACE

To declutter your life, you have to take out all things that you have and do not need. And the best way to start is to declutter your space. Go through your home, car, and office to get rid of all things in it that you do not need.

Start by asking yourself what is clutter. It does not necessarily have to be broken and defective items in your space. Clutter is everything you have that you do not need and as a consequence of not needing it, the item has not been in use for a while.

If you are like I was before clutter will include items you bought out of social pressure for the luxury of having it but have never put it to use.

I was the person that fell for marketing PR and was convinced that an appliance at the store would make my life easier. We are living in a digital and dynamic world. Everything is developing so fast and changing. And all the changes are being made readily available to us as soon as the item is launched.

The world is seeing a peak in innovations and inventions. New items are being created every day and better versions of them are being produced. If you have no self-control you will fall for what the marketing ad says and buy an item not knowing that it will not be of help to you.

A perfect example is kitchen appliances. I cannot count how many types of blenders there are in the world today. And honestly, I miss the old days where there was one type of blender that crushed what needed to be crushed and juiced what needed juicing. Right now, there is a blender that shreds, there is one that is only a juicer, another that crushes foods, and so on.

Getting all these items and putting them in your kitchen is going to cause congestion. Because these are only the blenders. What about pans and pots? We have not even picked out cutlery yet. Your kitchen space will end up being cluttered.

Items that are cluttering your space do not look old and ugly. Even the beautiful and shiny item in your room that you do not need is clutter. We have all managed to fall for all the pressure in the world to buy something because it is good for you only for it to end up congesting our homes. We need to move away from this habit.

## STATE OF MIND

Your mind records all that is around you. If you stay in a congested environment, you will reconstruct this state in your mind. Meaning that your mind too will be congested and cluttered.

This happens because first, you allow yourself to live in disorganization so your mind is also going to have disorganized thoughts. Then you are giving yourself the extra responsibility of carrying the burden associated with these extra items in your mind.

The mind is a special creation because it will only live the life it sees around it. If you live in a congested home that is disorganized your mind will also be congested and disorganized. You will not have clear thoughts because your mind will not know how to organize your thoughts.

Most times you will find yourself taking so long to finish a thought pattern because you are struggling with yourself to find other thoughts in your mind that relate to it. The clouded nature of your mind therefore affects your thinking process.

Then other related issues like short-term memory loss and fatigue kick in. Because you are not giving your mind the rest it needs.

You are decluttering your mind to take away the unnecessary baggage that will enable you to live freely and in peace. Declutter your space first so that the most important things in your life become clearer to you. As you clear up your space you end up clearing up your mind.

And the best way to start decluttering is to go room by room, item by item.

## GO ROOM BY ROOM

The process of decluttering your space and your life, in general, will not take a day. You will have to be patient and give yourself enough time to work on it. Enough time will give you room to ponder over all your possessions to decide what is important. With this realization, you can get rid of the less important things in your life.

The importance of going room by room is for you to understand what is in each room in your home and to identify if it is needed in that space. When I was decluttering, I was amazed at what I found in different rooms in my home. I was even shocked by what I found in the glove compartment of my car and in my office table drawers. My goodness, how did I live like that? There were so many unnecessary items in the various rooms and storage compartments that did not really make sense to me.

When I was working on a room, I would take everything out of the shelves and boxes and assemble them in one open place. Where the items were all visible to me. My decluttering process was more like rearranging the rooms. But this time I was only letting the important items stay.

I asked myself a few questions when doing this. First is what the item does for me. Then when was the last time I used it. The last time I used it determined its importance to me. If an item had not been put to use in a long time it only meant that it was not important. Because if it was, I would have used it more frequently.

Many items left my home like this. My first time decluttering my space was emotional. I knew the process was helping me and that is why I stuck with it. But it was not easy parting with my possessions. Especially the ones I had barely used. I often felt wasted when I had to let go of relatively newer unused items but stood by the process because I knew that I was to gain more from it.

While I was going room by room, I started off by having a list of what I had in each room. See why my sons think I have a “list condition”. It was easier for me to know everything that was in a room this way. I then updated my list to what was staying and what was leaving.

The lists helped me continue my decluttering even when I was not physically in the room because I would look at the list wherever I was and ponder on the items. I could then get myself mentally ready to get rid of items that were no longer necessary to me.

## MAKE IT A GAME

Decluttering may be emotional but it does not have to be a boring process. Make some fun out of it. Especially now that you are about to take back control of your life. You will no longer let what you have dictate how you live. But you will dictate how your possessions will serve you.

There are many ways you can make decluttering fun. The internet has many games on how to declutter. I know one game by Ryan and Joshua Fields. You declutter your space with as many items as the day of the month. So, if it is the first day of the month, you have to declutter one item, two on the second, and thirty on the thirtieth.

I find this game most effective when you use it in each room. Start on the first day of every month. Declutter one item on the list of the room's possessions that you would have made then progress gradually while following the sequential arrangement of days in the calendar.

You do not necessarily have to follow the calendar if you feel it is slowing you down. You can make your own calendar and declutter the items according to how many you have to on that day.

Put on some music and enjoy the process. You can burst a dance move as you move through the room. This will help you take away the heaviness of the process and for you to sit and enjoy it.

## QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Buy quality items so that you do not have to have so many similar items clogging up your space. I always use the example of batteries and bulbs. Low-quality brands of these products will have you always running to the store to get some more. And you will have to stock more of them for when the one currently in use stops working.

If you buy low-quality bulbs you will need a new bulb after a short time of replacing the bulb. Then cheap stops being cheap and becomes expensive. And your home will be congested because the extra bulbs are sitting somewhere waiting to be used. I use high-quality bulbs and I find myself only needing one replacement a year. That is if my son does not kick a ball in my home and break one.

You can never go wrong with good quality. It will last you longer and serve you better. You will end up getting the value of your money and your home will remain clutter-free.

## MULTIPURPOSE ITEMS

Multipurpose items will save you space because one item will be able to perform the functions of many different items. Having a multipurpose blender will help you save the space the other individual blenders would use. And the best thing about this is that you will be able to use the blender for its full uses. Rather than having multiple blenders and not having space for each one.

Having many different individual blenders as opposed to the multipurpose one will result in keeping the single purpose ones somewhere in the back and never actually using it for a long time. Multipurpose appliances were the best things invented for people that want to keep their space clutter-free. Because they can have one appliance that will perform many functions.



## DO IT FREQUENTLY

Repeating your decluttering routine occasionally from time to time will help you maintain a clutterless space. Clutter will always find its way back into your space. It will come back through the items we walk in with every time.

Declutter from time to time. I always repeat my decluttering process twice a year. What makes the process easy for me is that I always have a list of everything I have. Some items may have been essential to me in the past but eventually lose purpose so I take those out. After updating my list I do a sweep through the house to look for other items that may not be on my list. Like receipts and letters.

Doing this frequently has helped me maintain my minimalist home. My space is maintained and everything is always organized.

The decluttered items can either be sold, gifted, or donated. I had a big garage sale the first time I decluttered my home. I needed my money back for all the items I bought and never used. They were still in good condition and people that needed them could come to buy them.

I still occasionally sell items that I am decluttering but I do not have garage sales now. Because the items are a few so I just ran an ad online. Most of my clothes and shoes that are still in good condition are donated. I give them to charity because they will help other people who need them.

My books are gifted to family and friends who will benefit from the information. Once I read a book, I gift it so it does not have to sit in my space.

You will find your physical and mental health improving when you declutter your space. Never again will you have to work around the many needless things you have sitting in your space. And your mind too will be

liberated. It will take in the new and improved state of your space which is more organized and cleaner.



## STOP COMPARING YOURSELF

The dynamic world we live in today has a way of making us feel like our original selves are not enough so we need to copy other people's lives. Mostly we are forced to copy the lives of people we think or society thinks have made it to success. And everyone today is bragging about their "success". Everyone wants the world to know what they are doing with their lives.

I recently unfollowed a handful of YouTubers on Instagram and unsubscribed from their channels when I felt like their content was all about bragging. Most of them could not buy a phone or new shoes without the world knowing that they did. I personally feel that there is a difference between content creation and bragging. Their content did not sit well with me and I felt that it was only aimed at creating false perceptions and pressurizing other people.

When you start showing off every single purchase you make and turn your whole life into some reality show content then to me, you start to brag. Because you are constantly looking for ways to "make it big" then air it on the internet for your followers to see with the hope of getting their admiration and validation.

I have nothing against people who do so. If this is your idea of content then go for it. But consider what your bragging is doing to your followers. Most of them stopped living their lives a while back and started changing their whole lives to be like yours.

There is a difference between bragging and product influencing.

You are UNIQUE. And you have been created as you are because that is how you will fulfill your purpose on this earth. Just like how our fingers are not the same size so are people meant to be different. And that is why we have different personalities. Your personality makes you unique. And being yourself makes you stand out.

Stop comparing yourself to others who may have more than you do. Or people who seem to have figured themselves out and achieved what you want to achieve.

What happens when we compare ourselves with others is, we start being invested in how they live their lives. And what they do on a daily basis to get them to where they are. Then you will find yourself undermining how you have been living your life and seeing your life methods as defective. By doing this, you let go of your uniqueness to copy and paste the lifestyle of another to yours.

I did this with my home minimalist journey. There is a couple on YouTube that I admire. They have two sons as I do and I related to their life to some extent. I felt that I could only be successful if I used their life methods. I even decorated my home like they decorated their home. I saw pictures of their home from a blog they wrote on home minimalism. The end result of this was that my space ended up not being appealing to me because it simply wasn't me.

What I forgot is that everyone is unique. And by virtue of being unique, you have to incorporate something into your life to fit your personality and your character. Copy and pasting will make you live someone else's life and you will not be comfortable.

The reason for your discomfort will be that you are not connected with this new lifestyle. There is nothing in it that resonates with your personality. You are not the person to go about your business as others do. There is a special way you do it to fit your life needs and this is what makes you unique.

I am sure if you listen to the stories of truly successful people, they will tell you how they used their uniqueness to bring them success. Some of them will tell you how they were picked on in school for living their life like that or how everyone else in society made them believe that they will be failures because they were not like everyone else.

But they used their “flaws” to make their difference. This flaw other people see in you is what is best understood to you. It is a flaw in their eyes because they do not understand why you do things as you do.

Never feel like a failure because you are not like everyone else. Your uniqueness is your free ticket to success. It is what will make you stand out. Ride with it and be happy about it.

Never sit and compare your success to other people. And this goes two ways. Do not compare yourself with someone who you think is failing just to make yourself feel better for what you have. And do not compare yourself with people who you feel are more successful than you are to convince yourself that you are lagging behind.

Comparing myself to other people is what made me start living my life beyond my means. Because I felt like I was the only one left behind. I had the pressure to show that I was also making successful strides in my life.

I would buy things I could not afford to prove that I fit into their social class. And this is how I sank into debt. At some point in my life, I moved back into my parents’ home and I was so disappointed in myself. My landlord had kicked me and all my designer clothes out of his apartment complex. And I owed so many people money.

This feeling of having their money and knowing they can come for me at any time was tormenting. Walking in the streets was not easy because any of my debtors could recognize me and come for me. My negative trait of comparing myself to others didn’t better my life in any way, it only made me worse.

Declutter this negative trait from your life. Never compare yourself with other people to feel good about yourself or to put yourself down. This is negative in both ways. Your life does not have to be measured by the achievements of others. You will only grow if you trust your own process and accept who you are. Life is not a competition.

## DROP OUT OF THE COMPETITION

Comparing yourself to others creates competition. You will be working to outshine them. Sometimes these people you are working so hard to outshine already have their lives figured out and their success is genuine. Every achievement they have is something that is coming in naturally without them breaking a sweat.

But you are moving the impossible to get something that your life is not ready for. Imagine driving a big and expensive car today and being stressed by its monthly payments every time you get your bills. You have the car but now you cannot afford to buy it gas, your insurance bill is taking out a huge chunk of your salary and you can barely make the monthly payments. Do you agree when I say that your life is not ready for this car?

And the person you are comparing yourself to is making their car payments without moving a muscle. They are not stressed when the money is taken out of their accounts. Because they have planned for the deductions not to affect their finances and they will still have enough to supply their needs.

Drop out of this competition you are forcing into your life. That when someone gets something you also have to get it. Slow down. Is it a need? Do you need it in your life to live comfortably? Or are you buying it to please others? You will not go far in your life and increase your finances if you are constantly working to please others.

There is no winner in this competition. But there is a loser. And the loser is you because you will not be able to keep up or to catch up with the person you so desire to. Drop out before it is too late when you have managed to sink yourself in debt and bring embarrassment to yourself.

## SELF-AWARENESS

You have to have self-awareness. This is where you have a full understanding of yourself. You know who you are and why your life is as it is. And you will be able to trace where things went or are going wrong in your life.

Self-awareness will make you love your life and not compare it to others because you are well aware of why you live your life as you do.

Look into your life and find out what is making you have the urge to compare yourself to other people. Discover where this feeling arises in your life and what is causing it. When you are aware of this then fix that gap in your life. Fill it with self-love and other positive attributes that will make you embrace your own uniqueness.

If you have a habit of constantly comparing yourself to other people then self-awareness will not come easily. You will have to teach yourself this habit. As you are working to let go of the negative habit of comparison, teach yourself this positive habit of self-awareness and self-love. They go hand in hand. Love what you discover about yourself and work on filling the gaps currently present in your life.

I am referring to the negative traits we have in our lives as gaps to show you that they can be filled with something positive and meaningful. If you just think of them as something negative that you have you may be unwilling to go through the process of removing it. But thinking about it as a gap will help you learn many ways of filling it with something positive.



## FOCUS ON YOURSELF

Be happy for others and the achievements they have made but focus on your life. Do not compare this to yourself. It is okay to admire how someone lives his/her life. And you can pick a few tips and pointers from how they go about their business. It is okay to want to try these methods in your life. But make sure to incorporate them in your life to fit your lifestyle and personality.

No way of living life in this world is rigid. Everything is flexible and can be changed to fit your lifestyle. Just like dieting. We know that dieting is a way of detoxing the body and losing weight. But ask yourself why there are different diets in the world.

There is the ketogenic diet, paleo diet, intermittent fast, and Dr. Sebi's diet just to mention a few. Everyone, depending on their lifestyle and body, will find one of these diets beneficial to them. Because it is easier for them to follow the rules and to change their lifestyle to accommodate the diet.

One of the reasons why they could have a loving for one diet is the food is easily accessible to them, or they are better acquainted with the cooking styles in the diet. And you will see them recording good results and managing to meet their weight loss goals.

You could emulate how your friend has been able to shed off a lot of weight. But diving deep into their diet will not help you. From the little knowledge I have about diets, I know that you have to prepare your body first. And you have to pick a diet that suits your life and body type. Putting into consideration other things like your health.

You can want to start dieting like your friend, but customize it into your life by finding a diet that suits you. This more personalized diet will be easier to follow because you will own it.

Understand that other people's success does not mean you are a failure. Far from that. You are winning in your life and any achievement you have is still valid. Be happy for them but do not undermine what you have because it is not at their level.

Your comparison grounds are things that do not matter. You are basing your comparison on material possessions. And in the long run, forgetting about important things like your personality and the goals you have for yourself in your life.

Focus on yourself and your growth process. Take your time to grow yourself. Trust in yourself and your success. Celebrate your achievements no matter how small and take pride in them. They will give you the confidence and motivation you need to keep moving.

## ARE YOU INSECURE?

I am sure you just muttered a loud “no” in your head after reading the subtitle. Comparing yourself to other people means you are insecure about your life.

What is making you insecure? Is it the pressure to fit in? Do you have pressure to be seen as an equal? Is your life at the moment not satisfying? Do you feel the need to impress? Then you are insecure.

You need to name these insecurities. Name them so you become mentally aware of what they are. Then after naming them start to work on them. Approach all your insecurities with love. They are but gaps that you need to fill with better habits and with love.

Do not let your insecurities run your life. Be above the situation because you are working on them to make yourself better. Letting your life be led by insecurity gives the insecurity power to control you. And you will always compare yourself to others because you do not want to be left behind. You feel compelled to prove yourself.

## BE YOUR ONLY COMPARISON

Yesterday you should be your today's competition. Because you want to achieve more today and make fewer mistakes than you made yesterday. You are wiser today than you were yesterday. You have the capability to make more and work on using your past mistakes as learning curves.

If you make yourself your only competition then you will find yourself making positive strides towards achieving your goals. It is a healthy competition with yourself to become better than you were yesterday.

## OUTSIDE APPEARANCES ARE DECEIVING

I suggest that you critically look into everything before comparing it to yourself. Most things may look good on the outside appearance but are not good on the inside. Be careful about comparing yourself to such. Because what is inside is what matters. Work to have a lot of good things on your inside instead of focusing on outward appearances.

Blindly following someone else will have you getting things in your life that you do not need at all. Some people could even be using illegal means to get these things, or they have them so they have an extra thing to brag about. Maybe they have these things on a lease or they are bragging with things they do not own.

Comparing yourself to them and struggling to get these things is going to make you acquire these negative traits too. Be very careful about the people you compare yourself to on social media. You do not know their life story and why they need the item. Or how they even got it.

Live your life and run your own race in your own lane. Be happy with what you have and work hard to make a better you today than you were yesterday. Do not let these things blind you from seeing your goals and achieving them.



## HAVE AN INTENTIONAL LIFE

*A*s you declutter your life you need to change how you live your life and start living with intention. Let everything in your life have meaning to it. This means that you are not just living life carelessly but you are aware of yourself and where you are going with your life.

Living with intention means you are well aware of your needs. Everything you do is geared towards providing for these needs. And you have no urge and desire to purchase luxuries that bring more problems to your life than good.

I found out that when I gave my life more meaning I became intentional with myself. It was like a light bulb in my life had been turned on and I became aware of how recklessly I had been living. I used to shop for new clothes not because I needed them but because a very expensive store had a sale. The sale did not mean it was easier for me to purchase the clothes. It just meant I would get more for the amount I was going to spend anyway.

Everything that looked good to me became a must-have. Items my friends had purchased made me crave them even more. I was that guy in the group that was the “wannabe”. I was not making much at my job but I really wanted to make it look like I was living a rich life.

You should have seen me in my expensive clothes. Yes, I looked nice and flashy. My pictures were always good on social media and I looked to be living “the life” because I had all the good clothes and accessories. But if I told you that I was hungry most of the time because I could not purchase enough food you would not believe me.

My money was enough to supply my needs. But I was busy making my wants a priority. Believe it or not, I used to tick off the days on my calendar until my next payday. Things were that bad. Yet they did not have to be because I would have been living my life much better had I just lived within my means.

It took a lot of understanding for me to realize that all these things were going to happen to me when the time was right. Not when I forced them to come at a time when I had no capacity to maintain them. I also understood that it is the person wearing the clothes that makes them look good, it is not the clothes that make you look good. Even if my clothes had no designer labels on them as long as they fit well and were decent, I would still look good in pictures.

Maturity is important. Especially when you are decluttering your life. You have to be mature enough to accept the new lifestyle you are taking on. Minimalism is a life of living by your needs. Only mature people will understand why they have to let go of their wants and live only by their needs. Because your needs are what make you comfortable.

When you become more intentional with your life you take note of everything you do. You will no longer be spending your money on things you do not need. I know I used to have feelings of wanting to go shopping. It is not like I needed to buy anything, I just wanted to be in a store picking out stuff.

When you live your life intentionally everything will be done with purpose. You will not be wasting your resources on things that do not matter to you.



## PLAN YOUR DAY

Before you start your day make sure you have a plan for it. You need to know what you want from your day before you start working on the tasks you have. When you work on something aimlessly without a plan then you do not know what you want to achieve from it in the end.

Plan your day and know what you want to achieve. Know how you are going to work on each task that you have to so that you achieve your goals. Everything you do in your life should be able to teach you something. And to make you a better person.

I once sat in a lecture by a very successful man named Bill. He told his story of how he started his business and what made him succeed in it. Before Bill started his company, he told us that he worked for a small firm in the city. They had a small and congested office and there was always a lot of work to do.

He explained how working in such conditions can make you feel defeated in life. Many are the times he thought he would never make it. The dream everyone has is to work in an office that is in an expensive building with several elevators and men and women in expensive cladding. An office with more than one coffee maker and a break room with sweet-smelling donuts that never ran out of sugar and cream.

But Bill said that despite his working conditions he decided to be intentional about his life. He promised himself that he would never go home on any day without fulfilling his goals. In his mind, he knew that one day he was going to open up his own company. But he needed the experience first. And that is what he was going to get from his job.

Bill explains that the reason his business is successful is not that he graduated with honors. It is because he allowed himself to learn from his job. He experienced first hand how different situations needed to be tackled

and he learned things that were not taught to him in school. His intentional living made him the successful man he is today.

Every morning before you go out to start your day you need to take a few minutes and envision what a successful day looks to you. Dig deep within yourself and see what will make you happy if you achieve it in your day. Then go out and get it.

But remember to always set reasonable goals that you can achieve in a day. Do not kill your spirit by setting goals that are not achievable.

## DAILY ROUTINES

It is good to have a routine in your life. Small activities that you do each day to set your mind towards your goals. Activities that will make you relaxed and feel better about doing something.

I meditate each morning to become one with my goals. It helps me become more intentional about achieving them because I have a mental vision of how better my life is going to be after achieving them.

I sit on my yoga mat and take a few minutes to reflect on my goals, meditate on them, then I envision my life after achieving them. What I see makes me happy and I go out and work to get them.

You will work towards your goals better when you are more intentional about them.

## PRIORITIZE

Your needs are your priority. Never allow your wants to overshadow them. That is the same as compromising your comfort for things that will not bring you joy. Your needs are what make your life comfortable. If you do not have them then your life becomes strained and uncomfortable.

Priorities help you see what is most important to you. And it will allow you to be intentional towards them. Your actions should bring you closer to your goals. Every step in life should be geared towards achieving better. Attaining your goals brings you closer to your dreams. And the closer you are to your dreams, the sooner you start living the life you have always wanted.

Have a list of your priorities. Keep that list with you. Pin it on your phone and computer screen. Let it be something you always look at. Because you want to have a better life tomorrow than you do today. And the only way you will is if you work on what is important.

If you supply your life with the important things that it needs to achieve your goals. You cannot be wasting money on things you do not need all the time and expect yourself to have enough money to make an investment.

## DECLUTTER

Having items in your life that you do not need takes away the intention of your life. You should declutter and get rid of them. Letting them stay gives room for more items like that into your life. You will end up using your money and other resources to get things you do not need. And consequently, you will live your life without having a purpose.

Remove from your space and your life everything that has no importance to you. Take it out and create room to build your life's purpose. You will find yourself being intentional with the important things. And only working to achieve them all the time.

Your life will take a better course. And you will be able to shape your future because you are intentional with all that is important to you.

## BE INTENTIONAL WITH YOUR HEALTH

How will you enjoy success in your life if your health is not good? You need to be fit and healthy both physically and mentally for you to enjoy all these things. That is why you need to be more intentional with your health. You do not want to compromise it.

Be aware of things that undermine your physical and mental health and stay away from them. Eat well. Be intentional about what goes into your body. Have positive thoughts. Be intentional with what you think about.

Guard your health so you can be able to work on your goals and live the life of your dreams. Your health determines how you will work. It determines the energy you put into something. If your mental health is compromised then you will never think that anything good can come from your work. And if your physical health is compromised you will not be able to go out with the strength you need to achieve your goals.

You will also spend a lot of your resources on medicine to improve your health. You certainly do not need that. Become intentional with your health today to make sure you are not missing out on a lot of opportunities because your body is not able to perform the tasks it needs to.

Having good mental and physical health gives you double energy. You have the mental energy to direct your thoughts to success. And you have the physical energy to work with your body and achieve your desired results.

## PROCRASTINATION

This is best defined as time-wasting. And if you waste time in your life, you are not living intentionally. Being intentional with your life means you are taking everything that regards you seriously. You are serious about your job, home, family, and friends. Tasks given to you are also handled with a lot of seriousness and you are keen on all the details.

When you allow yourself to procrastinate then the seriousness of all these things will be lost to you. As long as you believe something can be done later then it means it is not important so it does not require your attention now. You will not be taking into account the importance of the details you have to deliver. And in the end, you will end up delivering substantial work.

Living with intention will make you look into every task that you have to do and analyze its details. You will then be able to come up with a plan on how to do them and even give yourself a deadline for completion. Then you will have enough time to go through your work and make sure you made no errors.

Procrastinating will have you doing things at the very last minute. I remember when I was in university, a few of my friends and I had this slogan, “if tomorrow is not the due date then today is not the do date”. We applied this when we had assignments and projects given to us by our Professors.

Every night before the due date we were up late trying hard to complete the assignment. Most times it was the first time I was even reading the question. And then the bulk that the assignment had would dawn on me and I would go into a panic. I stayed up the whole night working on completing the assignment.

There was a lot of research that needed to be done but because I had no time to do it I just did some shallow research and wrote my paper based on the information I had collected.

My Professors always graded my papers with a B. I was a B student when I knew deep down that I should have been an A student. My papers fetched a B because I have always been a good writer. But most of my professors told me that my work needed more research to elaborate more on the topics. I was compromising my life and grade because of procrastination.

Procrastinating makes you have a lot to do in your life all at the same time. Because after some time all the things you have procrastinated will catch up with you. And most times it feels like they all end up having the same due date. The work you put into them will be shallow. And you will have no time to review your work and check for mistakes or see what you left out.

This is a gambling risk. You will always be on edge of delivering faulty work because you do not know if the recipients will like it.

If you want to declutter your life you want to learn how to stick to your schedule and do everything when you are supposed to. This way you will not have a backlog of work that needs your attention. Your tasks will be well spread out to make sure each one of them is getting enough of your attention and resources.

Living with intention gives your life purpose. It makes you look at every day as a new opportunity to make your life greater. The feeling of knowing you can be better today than you were yesterday will excite you and propel you to move forward and higher into greater heights.





## UNPLUG FROM TOO MUCH INFORMATION

Information is what brings growth. That is why we are asked to get more education or to read books to gain more information that will be beneficial to our growth. What most people don't know about information is that getting too much of it often has negative effects on your life.

Too much information is poisonous to your well-being. It will get you to levels of saturation and confusion where you know too much but do not know how to put your information into use.

Your mind will take in the information overload to be a form of disturbance which really isn't beneficial to it. And we know how it is impossible to make a rational decision when you cannot have clear thoughts.

Having too much information on something basically introduces contradictions into your life on the topic which you are reading on. Everyone has different arguments about different aspects in life. This is what makes our personalities unique.

People argue out different topics based on their personalities. Taking in a lot of information on a particular topic is like taking in all these different ways of thought. So, you will have debates within yourself on which of these ways of thoughts is the best.

The debates are caused by a clash of personalities drawn from the different sources of thinking patterns. Your thought pattern is not accustomed to debating in a particular way which makes your argument seem different and more learned. Do not feel bad about this.

I used to think that because my argument was different from the thought patterns contained in the many books that I read then I was not keen on my life and was not doing things right. I felt like I needed to become a deeper

person in my understanding of the various issues so I needed to gain more information.

There will always be someone who will argue a point differently from everyone else. They will bring in a different school of thought that changes the course of the argument as you know it. If you are a person who takes in too much information without filtering what you need then you will bring this debate to yourself.

You will be allowing confusion into your life. Because you have your thoughts that match your personality and those that do not. The confusion will make it hard for you to make decisions. Because each time you want to pick a stand you will be confused by all that you have to consider.

Other thoughts will fill your mind and cloud your thinking process. You will start to second guess yourself and feel like the decision you have arrived at is the wrong one. This is why you need to unplug.

Unplugging means you are taking time away from mentally draining processes like information intake to give your mind rest. You are not taking in new information. It is just a time you are seated by yourself when your mind and body are at ease. This will help you internalize the information you already have. And you will understand it better because not so much is swimming through your mind causing you confusion.

To unplug also means you are accepting the information you currently have and finding ways to make use of it in your life. Useful information will become useless if you do not put it into good use.

And there are several ways you can achieve unplugging. Even though we are asked to learn something new every day to better ourselves and have growth, it is okay to take a break from learning.

Take a break from your books. Turn off the information intake and minimize the chances of getting an information overload.

Do not feel guilty about taking a break from taking in information. There is just enough one person can handle in a day. Do not feel guilty

when you reach your saturation point and need time to yourself.

## CONFUSION AND FRUSTRATION

When I started my career I got to a point of frustration when I found myself juggling too much and not being able to make decisions. I wanted to stand out at my job and be the guy who thinks out of the box when dealing with any situation. What I did is I became an information “junkie”. I always wanted to know things.

I read so many books, watched too much of CNN, BBC and other news channels, attended many meetings, webinars, and training. In short, anywhere I could get information I was there.

This felt like a good idea when I started doing it. I was always informed about the important things and I would shine at the office and during meetings when a situation arose. You should have seen me arguing out my points. I was so fluent and became even more confident in my information seeking techniques. This is when I had the right amount of information in me.

But when I surpassed my saturation point, confusion kicked in. I started encountering different schools of thought from the information I had previously acquired. The training I was attending was now teaching new ways to do things. How I was conducting my business before was benefitting me and now I was confused about how to move forward. I often asked myself whether I should adopt this new way of doing things that I had read about.

Life is different for everyone. What works for you may not work for someone else. This is something I did not understand at this point in my life. I thought that all information was valid. And that I had an obligation to apply everything that I had read about in my life.

I started using these new methods I was learning and applying different ideas that I got from the reading in my life. And confusion kicked in. Most

times I did not know what to do. I did not know which method to apply and I had so many debates within me. Things did not come clearly to me anymore because every side I decided to pick always had a negative side to it that made me reluctant to stick to that decision.

My life became so frustrating when the information I had was no longer helpful to me but was instead destroying me. I could not use it to solve any problem in my life and this made me stop being the cool “informed” at the office. I could not apply it in my career to grow and become better.

Getting information is good. But you need to get only what is enough. Do not clutter your mind with a lot and have no way of using it. You will become a prisoner of your mind because of all the debates that are always going on in it. And in the end, you will become a person with no stance because your argument changes every day.

I took a break from constantly wanting to get more information when I decided to declutter my life. And I can say that I got my sanity back. My mind was not loud anymore. I could hear my voice in my head. And I could think about better ways of solving a situation and come up with better ways of getting things done.

It was like a dark cloud hovering over my head had been removed and now I could think again. There was no clog because I allowed information I did not need to leave my mind.

And the most important thing that I did was that I found my own voice. Finding my voice meant that I knew what I preferred. And I started seeking information in this line. Anything that was not in my preference line was information I did not dwell on. I just became acquainted with what it was so I could anticipate what the other party could use to discredit my argument.

## DECISION MAKING

Taking in a lot of information means you are also taking in irrelevant information. Not every information source out there is relevant. And you most certainly do not want to be irrelevant, so stick to relevant information.

Sometimes people write or teach for the sake of doing so. Or they give information that they have not certified or verified. You take in the irrelevant information and become poor at your decision making when you follow it.

You will have no way of discerning the good information from the bad. I used to think that all information was certified and useful. This led me to never filtering what I was taking in. And I ended up making shallow and misguided decisions.

Your goal in life should be to get to a point where you make the best decisions. You are what you decide in your life. Your decisions are what determine your life outcomes. They determine the life you will live and the possessions in your life. If you are a poor decision maker then you will be unable to get to your full potential. Because you will always be stumbling.

You are on a journey to declutter your life. And you have come to this decision because you want to be set free of all the unnecessary baggage you have been carrying around that is undermining your life. It is wise to be a good decision-maker. This will help you know what is important to your life so you can retain it.

Having a lot of information will make you have a wide variety of options to choose from when making a decision about something. This will make it really difficult for you to decide on what is the best path to choose from the many alternatives that you have.

And it does not have to be like this. When making decisions you should have a clear mental path to your best decision. And having to go through so

much information with many different alternatives will cloud you from your best decision.



## TOO MUCH INFORMATION MAY LEAD TO ANXIETY

Too much information creates a form of noise in our minds. You will not be able to have clear thoughts and this will lead to frustration. Every time you are unable to make a decision or every time you make the wrong choice you will be disappointed in yourself. And you will start fearing the whole decision-making process.

When you fear to make decisions, and when there is a lot of information making noise in your head, you start showing signs of anxiety.

Anxiety is a mental condition where you do not know exactly what is causing the stress in your mind. The mind is not settled and there are a lot of things going on at once. Your poor decision-making skills that made you fearful will also contribute to anxiety.

Fear is another cause of anxiety. If you have fear you will be anxious because you do not know what the outcome of anything will be.

You need to unplug and allow your mind to quiet down. Give yourself time to be silent and allow your mind to settle.

## UNPLUG NOW

You have seen all the problems that too much information is causing in your life. It is now time to unplug and set yourself free from all this. And you can start by taking in a reasonable chunk of information every day. Know your limit and do not exceed it. Take in only what you need in a day then unplug to relax.

What you can do is sit in a room and listen to nice calming music. And have no one try to tell you something new. I would advise that you even keep your TV off and do not watch anything. Your mind is at rest. Do not let it go through the process of breaking down information as it tries to understand what is happening on the screen.

Stay away from your phone, turn off the news and keep the newspapers away. The notification that pops up on your phone is new information. And you are already at your limit, avoid it.

I find it beneficial to even delete apps that I do not use. Each app wants to send a notification to your phone. Delete the ones you do not need so that you do not bring in more information to yourself after you have unplugged.

This is the perfect time to connect with nature. Go out for a walk, ride your bike, go bird watching. Do activities that will re-connect you with nature. Your mind will find rest and you will be at ease. Nature always has a way of calming us.

You can visit the new coffee shop, stay home and bake, prepare a meal, anything to bring your mind rest. Or take a nap. Remember that you are also protecting your mental health by keeping mental ailments like anxiety away from you.

## HAVE TIME FOR CURIOSITY

Curiosity is good. It gives you interest in a topic. Filling yourself with so much information does not give you the opportunity to be curious. You will not have time to sit and reflect on a topic and want to explore more about it. As I said, a lot of information will make your mind noisy.

There will be no room to think about anything else. Good curiosity is good. It is only when you are curious about something that you will gain interest in it. And you will explore it more to learn about it. This is how new talents, hobbies, and interests are discovered.

Information stops being useful and inspirational once you take in more than you need. You will just know too much, but what you know will not help you. And you will not have the time and energy to take on new things.

The world is changing and new things are coming up every day. As much as you are in touch with the old information you should also embrace the new. And this new information will only benefit you if you have enough space in your mind to accommodate it.

You do not want to be the person that is always stuck in the past because they do not know what is happening in the present. When you unplug you will have time to reconnect with nature. You will observe the new things happening around you and this is how you will develop interests.

And the best thing about unplugging is that you do not have to think about anything. Your mind is free to be creative. If you are an artist this is the best time to create your art. Because your mind is free and what you create will come to you easily.

The main reason for decluttering your life is doing away with what you do not need. Unplugging from all the information will help you declutter and remove all the unnecessary information from your life. And never feel obligated to always be at par with what is happening currently in society.

You will not be left behind if you do not get the information first. I am positive that you will receive the information when it is most beneficial to you. And all the important information in your life will find its way to you. Unplug when you have to and rest. You deserve the rest and it will make the information you already have more useful to you.



## GET RID OF TOXIC FRIENDSHIPS

**F**riends are the people in our social lives that are close to us. People that help us live our lives better by being there for us at all times. They should be people who positively impact your life. Who are your friends? Who do you surround yourself with?

You are who you allow in your life. I hear many people tell me that they let anyone into their lives because you never know when you may need someone. This chapter is here to take away this obligation that society places on us where we make friends with everyone around us. And to bring them close to our lives because we think that there will come an instance in life where we will need their help.

I think this unfair obligation is what has led to the rise of many toxic relationships in society today. Many people are nowadays complaining about toxic people in their lives. And it has now become a trend for everyone to talk about the toxic people they are cutting off from their life. These quotes mostly go up around new years when everyone wants to start the new year clean and with positivity. Talking about how they need positive people around their space.

As you declutter your life you need to list all friends that make no positive impact in your life as clutter. You do not need them to live comfortably so they become clutter, in fact, they hardly add any benefit to your life. And all clutter in your life has to go for you to get your freedom.

There are people in your life who should be kept close. Because both of you benefit from each other's lives and uplift each other. Your friendship helps you grow into your success. Friends are people who you know will be there for you in all your life's seasons. Through both the positive and negative times.

But if you have strained friendships where you do not help each other grow then you need to let these people go. If you look at your social friend

group and do not feel inspired to be better, then that relationship is not helping you.

Some friends make you feel like your life is not enough because you do not have some things. They give you the pressure of trying to fit in with them. Your friendship becomes too much work because you are constantly striving toward pleasing them. And in the process, you end up living your life beyond your means.

A friend is someone who accepts you for who you are initially and helps you to become better. They do not make you feel inadequate by showing you that you are not at the same level they are in life.

I have mentioned in previous chapters that I had friends who constantly found ways to show me that I was inadequate. They constantly made me feel like my growth was slow and my success was never going to come. I became so bitter with myself that I always downplayed all of my success. In my eyes, I saw them as small and insignificant and did not deserve any acknowledgment.

The pressure to fit in got to me and I started living my life beyond my means. I was working hard to purchase luxuries over my needs. There was a silent competition going on between my friends and me where everyone wanted to outshine the other. We were always looking for better things to buy that would put you at a higher level than the others.

But as I was living like this my income was not enough to finance this lifestyle. Debt came rushing in. I was in so much debt that I sank deep into depression. My dream at this time was to win the lottery or have a rich distant relative leave me his/her wealth so that I could walk away from my life of debt.

And the worst is when you have such friends and you are deep into such a relationship to a point where moving away from them does not look like an option. It was only when a relative of mine pointed out the toxic nature of these friendships that I realized I actually had the option of leaving.

These people were ruining my life and wasting my time and resources. I was already in deep debt and depression. And I owed it to myself to become better. Walking away was not impossible, it was the best solution to my problems.

My encounter with minimalism also helped me realize that these friends were clutter. They did not bring comfort in my life and I could live perfectly without them. Eventually, I let them go. And it was like breathing fresh air for the first time in a very long time.

My life goals became clearer because their friendship was stopping me from engaging in meaningful activities that will lead me towards my goals. I acknowledged that I had made bad decisions that sank me in debt because of my emphasis on keeping up with standards that my friends had set. And I made plans on how to pay them back, move away from these friends, and work on myself to be the best version of me.



## A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP

Toxic relationships are made up of people with toxic traits who have no meaningful benefits to one another. Any relationship that undermines the people in it and makes them feel unworthy is a toxic relationship.

When you have friends that try to control you and make you do as they please then you are in a toxic relationship. Their actions show that they think you are a person of a weak personality who will always follow their directives.

What they often do is make you feel like you cannot live without them. They ensure you are attached to them to a point where leaving them seems unachievable. This is disrespecting you. Such people will never take you seriously or give you a chance to grow yourself. They will constantly find ways to put you down and make you feel like your life only has meaning when you are with them.

A toxic friend will never have regard for your boundaries. They will not respect your private life and will meddle in your business without giving regard to your privacy. You will not have your life to yourself. And they will not care whether such actions annoy you. Remember you are supposed to do everything they tell you to do. So why would you be upset when they meddle in your life?

Worst of all, they will make you do things that you have mentioned you do not like doing or that you have no interest in participating in as they have no regard for your boundaries. They take away your energy and light and leave you feeling bad about yourself.

You have the power to change this. And the best way to change it is to walk away from such relationships. It is never too late to do so.

These people are not honest with you. They never have been and never will be. Because they know how awesome you are. They see the potential in

you and they know that you can become better than them.

They feed you lies and keep you down to make sure you never achieve this potential. They do not want to see you doing better than them and will never take responsibility for running your life or limiting your growth. Do not give them this opportunity. Walk away from the toxic relationship.

## WALK AWAY

I would recommend that you turn around and walk away from these relationships. Say goodbye to them and close that chapter. There is rarely ever any remedy for toxic relationships. A few friends will be willing to be told that their actions towards your life have been toxic and actually change.

Most of them will make it your problem. They will turn the tables and make you look like the one at fault. And they will brand you as ungrateful for all the good things they have done for you because they feel entitled.

Do all you need to make your walking away easier and to make sure that you do not return to the relationship you walked away from.

I deleted all the phone numbers of the toxic friends that I walked away from and unfollowed them on social media. Then I got rid of everything in my life that would remind me of them. It was like doing a full body detox of all the toxicity. And it felt good. I did not want to put myself in a position where I would walk back into those relationships.

But it is good to always respect these people. Do not go out tarnishing their name and making them look bad. This will only make you a toxic person as well. You are looking to better your life. There is no reason to pick up bad habits as you try to make yourself better. Move away from these relationships in peace. Don't stir up controversy or breed hatred.

Your new life may need adjusting too but use that as a way to start a new life. You cannot move onto greater things if you are still holding on to what is breaking you. There will be no space to accommodate the new things as the space that the new things would have occupied is still filled by the toxic relationships that you haven't let go of. And you will not give them the recognition and attention they deserve because you will not be in a position to recognize them, your attention will still be on your past.

I think that you have observed that in life when you do away with what was not useful to you, the useful things come rushing into your life. It sometimes feels like a coincidence but it is not. I remember being promoted at my workplace after I walked away from my toxic friendships. That promotion is something I had been waiting for in my life for a really long time.

This new position came with good money, more benefits, and an assistant. But it only became meaningful to me when it came at that time when all these people had been let go from my life. Because I no longer had any baggage. It's almost as if the toxic relationships had been holding me back.

If the promotion came while I was still in the toxic relationships, I would not have been responsible. All the newly found money and benefits would have been squandered away in my attempts to please other people. It felt like a coincidence but today when I look back, that promotion could not have come at a better time.

The new position brought me good healing. Because I was restructuring my life and it helped me with the resources I needed to do so. I had more money to save and use to grow me as a person and had additional responsibilities in my workplace which kept me occupied. I did not have time to chase after old relationships. My promotion helped me walk away from my toxic relationships.

## DO NOT BE SENTIMENTAL

It is normal to reflect on the good memories you had with your previous friends. But always remember that you walked away for a reason. The relationship was not bringing any value to your life and you had to walk away to do better for yourself.

By not being sentimental I mean that you should not feel like the memories mean you should go back to the friendship. Memories are to be remembered. They should never create any obligation.

Focus on creating better relationships with better people. Relationships that will make you grow, that will take you to greater heights. Create new memories with these new found friends.

## MAKE NEW FRIENDS

I love meeting new people. It makes me feel refreshed to meet people I have never met before and have a conversation with them. But as I do this I know that not everyone should be retained in my life.

Some people are meant to be met and then you go your separate ways. And others are meant to be kept to create a lasting relationship with them. Know the difference between having a friend and an acquaintance.

The difference between these two is how you will stop yourself from creating toxic relationships again. Be wise when making new friends. Because you need to be careful about who you let into your life. Someone that you do not need should not be allowed to get close to you.

Make new friends that share your views in life. People who are willing to build a long and lasting relationship based on honesty, love, and growth. Your new friends should be people that accept you for who you are and will be with you through all seasons of your life.

Take time to grow a new friendship. Both parties should put in work. Engage in positive activities that will help strengthen your relationship. And become friends that will be there for each other at all times.

Your new friendships should give you purpose. It should help you grow and have a better view of life. You should look at your friends and be inspired by them to become better. Not in a negative way. But you should be inspired to grow.

## HONESTY

At every stage in your relationship with your friends you have to be honest to yourself and to them. Never lie to keep the relationship going. Your friends should be able to handle honesty and your friends should be willing to change.

When I was in my toxic relationship I found it hard to be honest with my friends. Most times I was struggling financially but could not be honest with them that I needed rent money or money to buy food so I could not afford to go for their plans. I was ashamed of my situation and did not want them to regard me as poor.

I was living a lie. And I made sure that they would never find out the truth about my situation by making sure there was no link between them and people that knew about my struggles.

Imagine a life where those that are supposed to help you are the ones that you cannot confide in. I was a mess because of this. There was no one I could trust with my problems and that made me feel bad about myself.

Friendships do not have to be like that. Your friends should take you as you are. They should be able to help you and lift you up when you are facing a crisis. You should never have to be ashamed about what they will think about you.

Being honest with yourself will also help you know who you are at all times. You will not feel the need to impress people or to live a life that is not yours.

## PUT YOURSELF FIRST

Do not lose yourself in the friendship. Always make sure you put yourself first. Fulfill your needs first before you fulfill the needs of the friendship. You will only be able to be a good friend if you are at your best. And you are only at your best when you have comfort because your needs have been supplied.

Do not allow a friendship to change you and take away your values. Always preserve your good values. They are what makes your personality unique. I am sure you do not want to lose your uniqueness. Because your unique values make you stand out.

Never compromise your happiness to make other people happy. I know this is what we see in fictional movies and books. Your life is not a Telenovela or a fictional book. Stop compromising yourself because of what you see in those films or read in books that this is the best way to show your loyalty in friendship.

Be yourself and put your needs first. If your friends cannot handle this then walk away from this friendship. You do not need it. A good friend will understand why you have to put yourself first and will not make you feel bad about it. They will not make it look like you are being selfish to them.

Let go of your toxic friends because it is the best thing to do for you. Let go of these friendships because you want to better yourself. And do not fall for their traps when they come calling. These people will search for you but do not let them back in.

Always remember the reason you walked away. And if they showed you that they cannot change then do not fall back to that relationship. It will end up being toxic again.





## BE ASSERTIVE IN YOUR DECISION MAKING

*Y*our life decisions are what determine the quality of your life. They determine if you are living your life as per your potential or not. From a young age children are taught to have good decision-making skills.

My mom would send me to the store and if I did not find what she sent me for I would have to make a decision on whether to purchase the alternatives or not buy anything at all.

When I had a situation in school with other students or my teachers, my parents always made me see how my decisions affected my outcome. I would hear my mom say that it is good to have wisdom so that you make the right decisions because good decisions often lead to successful outcomes. And now that I am all grown up, and I have a family of my own I can attest to this.

You are your decisions just like your body is what you eat. Decision making was not always my stronghold. I have shared how I was in toxic relationships with my friends who led me to make poor life decisions. I struggled with picking the right choice and at some point in my life I was convinced that I will never pick the right side to anything.

It felt like I had some sort of bad luck because the path I often chose when making decisions frequently had me suffering. Something bad would happen and I would end up with losses. And I was so jealous of people around me who made decisions and good things happened to them almost instantly.

As a young man starting his career I did not understand when people said, “give me time to think about it and I will tell you my decision”. In my head I would question what they needed to think about. It is just a yes or no answer. Pick a side and let us work with it already.

But as I grew older and suffered in the hands of my poor decisions I decided that it was time for a change. I needed to turn things around in my life and find this wisdom my mom always spoke that would help me make better decisions.

As I was changing my life to a minimalist one, I read in one of the many minimalist books that I engaged with that it does not matter what decision you choose, the decision-making process, and your position on your decision is what matters.

Having already come up with a decision, are you assertive? Do people around you trust that you have made that choice and you are not changing?

I came to realize that people never took me seriously when I did not make wise decisions. This often reflected in how I never stood my ground. Today my stand would be one thing and the next day or hour I would have changed and taken another path. I probably wasn't confident in my decision and my constant change of stance probably highlighted this to my mates.

On your journey to declutter your life you need to have impeccable decision-making skills. You also must be assertive. You have to make the decisions firmly and ensure that people respect your decision by standing by it.

There are many decisions that you have to make in a day. Making your decisions assertively will make sure you do not have to go back to something you had already made a decision on.

This will lead you to greater heights because you will not spend much time constantly rethinking your decisions and going back on them. The time that would have been spent on this will be put into use elsewhere. Your assertiveness will also make people around you know that your word was final and you are not going back on it.

When I became a father I realized the importance of assertiveness in decision making. My easily wavered decisions made it impossible for me to

discipline my children. I would tell them something but they never took it seriously because they knew I did not stand my ground.

Parents, you know what I am talking about. Children know from a young age when you are the softie. They never take you seriously because they know a decision you have made can be changed at any time with a little persuasion.

My sons would give me the cutest puppy eyes when I gave them a time out that made me pity them and reconsider the punishment. Those eyes had me hooked and I felt guilty for punishing them. But in doing so I was failing in my parenting.

If you do not make decisions, or you do not make them assertively, you will have a backlog of many things you are required to make decisions on. You will have a decision clutter box in your mind of the many things that require your decision but you do not know what you want.

When you constantly put off a decision you are tiring your mind with all the clutter. Because that is one extra thing that will linger in your mind and you will end up thinking about it, among other things, from time to time.

I have mentioned that I did not understand why people would want to be given time to think about a decision before making it. Because at that time I was a hasty decision-maker. Never did I take time to think about something and the repercussions it would have on my life. This is what made me change my mind all the time. Because a few steps into the path I had chosen I would realize that was not the way I wanted to go.

For you to make a wise decision you have to think about it. Think about the effects the path you take will have and other things that are related to the decision. This will help you make an informed decision that will see to it that all sides are getting the best from it.

But do not put off the decision. There is a difference between taking time to think about something and putting it off. When you take time to think about it you are actually going through the decision making process.

And this will help you make your decisions assertively because you are confident that the path you have chosen is the best way to go.

But if you put off a decision you are not thinking about it. You are waiting until the time when it is absolutely necessary for you to make the decision. And then you will make a hasty and misguided choice that you will later have to change or look for remedies for the loss suffered.

When you constantly put off making a decision your brain becomes tired of the clutter. You are giving it so much to think about and you will end up with misinformed and misguided decisions.

## BE ASSERTIVE NOT OVERLY AGGRESSIVE

There is a difference between being assertive and being overly aggressive. The latter means you are being confident in an unwise decision. You are making choices to show your superiority and not to help the people involved.

Assertive decisions are those made out of confidence. Not overconfidence to show your supreme decision as the decision-maker. Remember that the decisions you make will have some impact on other people's lives. You want to be careful to make sure you are not causing them harm.

An assertive decision is made firmly but respectfully. You are acknowledging the interests of all people that are going to be affected, and laying out an all-rounded decision that will cater to all their interests.

Assertive people are:

- Self-assured
- Confident
- People with clarity of mind
- People that are persistent with their goals and work on achieving them

## DECISION MAKING SKILLS

You need to work on your decision-making skills. These skills should be impeccable for you to have enough confidence in the decisions you make. You will only achieve assertiveness when you are confident in your decision.

Imagine the embarrassment of making a decision and causing a lot of damage from it. People get fired from their job positions because they made the wrong choice in something they were entrusted with and caused the company a loss.

Even in your own life, you will be faced with so many situations that will require you to make decisions.

There are always three types of decisions, the wrong choice, the right choice, and your best choice. Always aim at discovering what your best choice is.

And this will need you to be innovative. Most times life may seem to have dealt you only two cards. The wrong choice and the right choice. But the good thing is you can be innovative and creative in your decision making. You can tailor both situations and take the good thing about each to make your best decision.

Your decisions will determine your growth. When I finally got my decision-making skills better I got promoted. I have shared that I was promoted after I walked away from my toxic relationships. At this time I had started making decisions that would better my life and bring me growth.

I had come up with payment plans for my debts and I made the decision to no longer live my life beyond my means. My good decisions made me eligible for the promotion. Nobody wants a poor decision maker handling many responsibilities in their company.

## YOUR EMOTIONS

Never make a decision when you are emotional. This negates assertiveness. With assertiveness you should have confidence in your decisions. But when you make decisions based on an emotion you will not be confident that you are picking the right path. At that moment it will feel like the right thing to do, but when you are calm and not under the influence of your feelings you will see the mistake you have made.

I know how making decisions when you are extremely happy gets you entangled in situations you do not want. But when you were happy it felt like the best decision to make. This also happens when you are sad and angry.

When I am angry I am faced with the temptation of making a decision that will injure the people that have angered me. The temptation is powered by my anger and it feels good at that time to get back at the people that hurt me. Revenge seems like the best way to go. But each time I decided to go down this road I ended up hurting myself more.

Because I could not imagine that I was the person that caused other people to hurt like that. It was an uncomfortable feeling that left me in a worse state emotionally than I was when I was angry. I end up questioning why I decided to take that path because I gained nothing from seeing others hurt.

Wait until you are sober and not under the influence of anything including your emotions when making the decision. You will be more in control of the situation and the repercussions of whatever choice you make will be clearer to you. This will make you confident in the decision you make and to be more assertive when doing so.



## HAVE CLARITY

Be clear in all you do. The best way to make an assertive decision is by knowing that the methods and thoughts that went into making the decision were genuine and honest.

There will be doubts about your decision if you know you made them fraudulently. Any dishonest move made in secret will always come to light. And then your whole decision will be discredited and you will be held liable for any losses suffered.

It is better to be clear as you make decisions. Let everyone know your interests in the matter so they can also be clear with theirs. This will help you know all that is at stake with the particular decisions and pick the right choice.

You will also have the confidence of the people that are affected by your decisions. Everyone wants a clear person that will not corrupt their dealings. The world is full of so much corruption today.

Being clear with what you are doing will help keep you from being entangled in the corruption vice. I know how corruption deals seem to bring more benefits. I have received offers here and there in my life. But you should know that those benefits will be short-lived. There will always be a loophole that will trace the irregularities back to you. And you will suffer the consequences.

## APPEARANCE

How you present yourself will determine how people will regard your decisions. You should be smart and speak eloquently with authority. Your body language will improve and those affected by your decision will trust your judgment.

Assertiveness is confidence. The better presented you are the higher your confidence. Nobody will trust a decision you make when you are looking fearful.

Being fearful will also make you not be assertive. And the decision you make will not be respected. The people involved will always come back and try to persuade you to change your mind. Or you could be the one to persuade yourself to change your mind.

Like when you are out shopping. Because you were not firm when you made the decision to only shop for needs. You will find yourself picking other items that are not on your list and you will end up undermining your life's progress.

## HAVE BETTER COMMUNICATION SKILLS

How you present your decisions determines if you are assertive or not. Being assertive is about confidence and connecting with the people you are speaking to. They need to understand what you are saying and be able to follow your directives clearly.

You will be confident that everyone understood what you meant and there will be no implementation problems. An assertive decision is one made with confidence and is clearly stated. Good communication skills will help you make sure the message is passed to the receivers. No negative emotions will be raised from it.

## YOUR CIRCLE

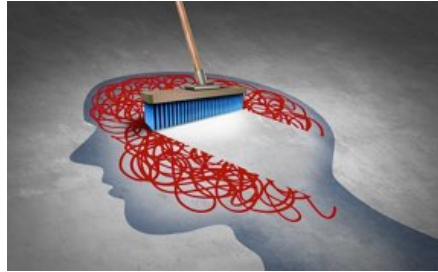
The people in your circle should also be great decision-makers. Remember we said that you will be making friends with people that inspire your growth? You should be able to look at them and learn better ways of making your decisions.

And you will have accountability partners. People that will be looking out for you to make sure you are making good decisions. And they will be able to help you master the ropes of good communication and decision-making skills.

I find myself more confident doing something that I have been coached by someone close to me on how to be better. They do it from a point of love and teach me with what I know. And I am confident in their lessons because I know they genuinely want me to be better.



## CHALLENGE NEGATIVITY



Many are the times we are tempted to start believing all the negative things said to us. We start feeling like our lives will amount to nothing, that we won't achieve any meaningful thing in life. And mostly these feelings come up after you have suffered disappointments in your life, setbacks that leave you feeling devastated.

It is normal and healthy to be sad when you face a loss. But be very careful about what you say to yourself and how you handle the situation. Our minds should be protected at all times in our lives if we want to have growth.

The mind has two parts, that is, the conscious mind and the subconscious mind. Our conscious minds have been designed to be objective. It is in touch with your senses making it active to everything you do in your life. But the subconscious mind is subjective. It has no personality of its own. This means that it has no way of discerning right from wrong.

The subconscious mind is what implements different situations in our lives. And because it has no way of discerning the right from the wrong it will only implement in your life that which you think.

How this works is the subconscious mind receives its information from the conscious mind. And it will never implement in your life anything you think of in the negative. If you have negative thoughts and feelings towards wealth, individual growth and money be sure that you will never receive

them in your life. Nothing you think of in the negative will manifest in your life.

I have heard people say things like “money is the root cause of evil or wealth brings no happiness”. These people are living in poverty. They have no growth in their life and are unable to make ends meet for themselves. And this is because of the negative affirmations that they keep making in their lives. Their negative mindsets become part of their normal reality.

In your quest to declutter your life you need to let go of all negative thoughts. Negativity is not your life portion. So it should be kept as far away from you as possible. You need to challenge any negative thoughts that come into your life. Never accept them. Your reason for challenging them is to discredit them and uphold your life’s positivity. It is not for you to start believing the negative over the positive.

Negativity is a disease in your life but positivity is the antidote. When you declare positive things about yourself you will be able to believe that you can make it to any level you want to achieve. You will believe that you were created to be great so growth and success can happen for you too.

At the point in my life where I had my toxic relationships, I remember being very negative about everything. I was bitter about being the black sheep of the group that was struggling financially to make ends meet. My bitterness turned to anger and jealousy towards my “friends” who had it easy in life. They had been born into rich families and most of them were working in their family business. Those that were not had taken advantage of their family connections and secured positions in luxurious companies.

Then there was me who was a struggling employee of a small business entity. I developed a negative mindset and unconsciously made negative affirmations in my life every day. It is not the friendship that made me bitter but it was my attitude towards the situation. I already had friends that made me feel bad about my financial situation. They made me feel like I was somehow “financially cursed” and would never be at their level.

These feelings were taunting. They made me hate my life as it was. I remember that I had a plan on how to build my wealth and create my success. But all the negativity blinded my vision from my goals. I became a complainer and was never appreciative of what I already had.

Every time I wanted more than what I currently had. Never did I take time to celebrate my wins or to plan how I was going to win. My life was doomed anyway so why even bother. Then there was the pressure to fit in. Already I feel defeated about life and do not believe I will make it to a position where I have wealth and success. And at the same time, I am using everything I have to prove to my friends that I am an equal.

I was confusing my subconscious mind and jeopardizing my life in the process. Because even though I felt doomed I still wanted to be successful. But it was impossible to get it if I kept being negative.

You need to let go of all negative thoughts by challenging their authenticity. This means that you are discrediting their legitimacy and unleashing the lies behind them. After deciding to change my mindset I started challenging every negative thought and idea that came to my life.

Every time I felt like I could not do something I asked myself what set of skills made me different from other people who had successfully done the task that I wanted to do. They are people like me who believed that they could do it and they worked on their goals to achieve them. And so would I, I would change my mindset and work towards accomplishing all the tasks before me and success would come to me.

My life motto changed to “success is mine and all good things will happen to and for me”. These positive affirmations gave me confidence. I read in different books about the power of positive affirmations in your daily life and I started making these affirmations to myself every day.

And the change I experienced was like no other. I did not need anyone to come and validate me. I was doing it for myself by being positive and not giving negativity the power to put me down.



## THOUGHT DISTORTIONS

Recognize the thought distortions in your life. Our minds have a way of believing that negative things happen to us because of a certain trait in our lives. Then we ponder on this thought and give it the power to disorient our lives.

I had a phase in my life where I was losing friends. All my friendships were too toxic after a short while and I had to leave them behind. Or they left me. There was a lot of drama in my life caused by these failed relationships and with time I was convinced that I was the problem. It hurt that I had many people, most of whom I had considered being my friends, walking away from the friendship that we had built. This severely weighed me down.

I concluded that if I was not the problem then not all my friends would have left. So I ended up believing that I was a toxic person who did not deserve any good thing. It all felt like my fault that I even stopped trying to make new friends.

The pain of having to go through another failed friendship was still fresh in my mind. The fact that I blamed myself for the exits did not make the situation any better.

You need to learn how to forgive yourself and heal from past trauma. My experience of losing my friends caused me trauma and it negatively affected my life. I needed to forgive myself and to heal from it so I could move forward with my life.

If you do not heal from an experience that has caused you pain then you will not be able to avoid negativity in your life. Negativity preys on your vulnerable state. It looks at what is hurting your life and attaches itself to it.

It is human to reflect on your life's misfortunes. But dwelling on them will allow you to think more of the negativity while you are supposed to be

challenging it by thinking about the positive things in your life.

## CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

There are times when negative thoughts are going to come into your mind. They may be caused by something someone said to you or an experience you had. These thoughts are going to spark a conversation within you. They are going to try and show you a pattern of bad luck and have you convinced that you will not achieve success in something in your life because your life is marred by such unfortunate occurrences.

One way to combat this is to challenge the negative feelings. I challenge these feelings by affirming to myself that I can get to any height I believe I can. I tell myself every day that I am better than who I was yesterday and everything is working in my favor. This is the best way to harness the abundance that is in the world to yourself.

When you choose to believe in yourself despite all the negativity that you are facing then you are affirming that you are a winner. Your subconscious mind will pick this and manifest wins in your life.

Analyze the cause of your negativity and fix it. My negativity was caused by my inferiority complex. I did not believe that I was capable of achieving anything in my life. When I made changes the first thing I started with was working on my confidence. I had to believe in myself if I wanted anything good to happen to me. It is only when you believe that you can do it that you will be able to do it.

## AVOID BEING JUDGMENTAL

I know that we often get tempted or actually do judge other people. We all want to feel good about ourselves. And most times we can go to extremes to have these feelings. One such extremity happens when we start judging other people and putting them down so we can feel superior.

Society has made everyone believe that you have to be superior to others for you to feel good about yourself. These feelings are not good. It invites negativity and unnecessary competition in our lives. Because you will always want to be at the top so you are always competing with everyone else, even in the most unnecessary of situations, to be different from them.

You do not know what other people are facing that is making them be as they are. Different people face different situations that have shaped their lives to be as they are. Judging them makes you a toxic person. And it invites negativity into your life. Because you are looking at the negative side of everyone to bring them down. You end up being that toxic person who you had cut off from your life.

Slowly you will also start seeing negativity in life situations and with time you will have an eye for faults. No wrong thing will happen around you that you will not be aware of. This is very dangerous and a bad way to live your life. If you are awake to the negativity you will not embrace all the good happening around you.

You are only judging because you are not content with what you have. Find satisfaction in what is in your life at the moment. And take time to appreciate how far you have come. This is how better things will find themselves to you. Because you appreciate all you have and honestly work to have more.

When you let go of being judgmental you will be shutting the door of negativity. Your life will have more room for positivity because you are not in unhealthy competition with anyone to be better. When you are judgmental you have the pressure to always be the best so the ones you were judging do not turn back and judge you.

Challenge the negativity by giving yourself more room for positivity. Where there is positivity, negativity cannot survive. It will rush out because toxicity does not stay where there is a fresh and clean environment that is fueled by positivity.

## PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Be grateful for everything in your life. Have contentment and show appreciation for all the things that happen to you. When you show gratitude you will be able to do away with negative traits like constantly complaining about happenings in your life.

If you train your mind to only see the good things in every situation you will encourage growth and success in your life. Because you are content with what you currently have. And you are not creating unnecessary competitions to have what you do not have.

Gratitude is positive. It will help you enjoy the benefits of all situations. This could have been lost to you when you were focusing on the negative side.

Sometimes there is no negative side to something, but because you are used to looking for the negative you set high and unreasonable expectations. And when they are not delivered you start complaining. Refrain from living like this. Look for the positive and lower your expectations to reasonable standards so you will enjoy everything that comes your way.

## YOUR STRENGTHS

Train your mind to focus on that which you can do and not dwell on what you cannot do. Focusing on your strengths will help you see that you are capable of success. This means that you can actually do something and reap good results.

But if you fixate your mind on that which you cannot do then you will always be sad and angry with yourself. Stop comparing yourself to others and having unnecessary expectations about yourself. There is just so much you can do with the resources and strengths you have.

Take advantage of them and use them for your benefit to get the best results. Invest in ventures that allow you to put your strengths into use. Not those that make you look bad and have bad results because you cannot deliver in them.

If you find yourself developing negative thoughts, stop for a while, and think about your positive attributes and strengths. Think about what you can do and the many benefits you have because of it.

This is challenging the negative thought of not being good at something. You are challenging these thoughts by believing that you are good at other things that set you apart and make you special.

## SEEK HELP

There are many people out there ready to help you better your life. Some of them do it professionally and others are your friends and family who want to help you live better. Take advantage of this help and use it to become better.

It is okay to not be able to overcome this negativity on your own. We were all created in the world to complement each other. Where you have a problem there is someone that can help you find your solution.

Asking for help should never be stigmatized. It is the best way to make sure you are achieving your goals. Because there is someone that is watching you and making sure that you are staying true to yourself and your goals. They help you to be accountable for your life and actions.

Go for counseling or therapy. Talking to professionals will help you realize what is causing the negativity in your life. And they will help you make better decisions that will change your mindset and feel a change in your life.





## EMBRACE JOURNALING

A journal is somewhere you write down issues that concern your life. It is where you can write about anything that affects you actively or inactively in your life. Your journal will help you look at different aspects of your life and be able to visualize them.



And the most important advantage of keeping a journal is you will not forget anything because all your life issues have been written down. You can always open your journal and find them. This liberates you from the obligation of walking around with many thoughts and ideas swimming in your mind.

When I was a young boy I remember making a song about something my parents asked me to do. If I was sent to go get something in another room I would go singing the item out loud until I got to the room it was and picked it up. This was my way of remembering what I was sent to go get. And reducing the unnecessary forgetfulness and having to come back to my parents to ask what they told me to go get.

As I grew, this habit stuck with me. I was now not singing out loud but dwelling on important thoughts so I would not forget about them. When I was not dwelling on these thoughts I forgot about them and ended up not performing an important task. It was frustrating when I remembered later about something I had to do but had forgotten about it. Most times, when I started working, I would forget about my appointments and very important office meetings.

It is human to get busy and forget some of the important things that require your attention. But journaling is here to make sure that even if these things are not on your mind you can still find them in your journal and get to them.

Journaling is the best way to declutter your mind. You are writing down your tasks to get them off your mind so you can focus on other things. And it takes away the worry and fear of forgetting about the important tasks that you have. You will not have to go singing all your tasks as I did. Now you will be liberated and even more confident about yourself and your day because you know that all important tasks will be completed.

## DECLUTTER YOUR MIND

If you want to declutter your life you need to start with your mind. Liberate yourself from so many thoughts and create space to have important thoughts. When your mind is filled with many thoughts it becomes hard to have clear thoughts or to remember anything. Because you will be holding on to thoughts of your important tasks or new ideas you have.

You do not want to lose them because losing them means forgetting about them. So, you are trying to think about something else while clinging to your other thoughts. It becomes impossible to have a clear and conclusive thought if your mind is in such a state.

You will end up with half-baked thoughts. These are thoughts that are not complete and conclusive in themselves. You will not be able to completely achieve your goals if you think like this.

The solution to this is to write everything down. Have a notebook or an app on your devices where you can write down your thoughts. You will be freeing your mind from these things and allow yourself to think about other important things in your life at that moment.

Your tasks, thoughts, and ideas will not be lost because they are written down. You can refer to your journal and read about them to remember. At this time they will be what is important to you. And you will be able to think about them in depth because there are not so many things swimming through your mind at the same time.

Sometimes you can find yourself coming up with a new idea, plan, or goal for your life. And you may not have time at that moment to think about them and fully conceptualize them. Carrying them in your mind until you are ready to work on them is not wise. You will end up with a lot on your mind that will impact your productivity negatively.

Maybe the idea is not even important to you at that moment. Our minds are a funny creation. They bring up different thoughts at different times in our lives. Like you can be in a meeting and then have a thought of what you want to eat for dinner. Or you can finally find out how to build your daughter's playhouse better, you realize that you were missing one important step.

Writing down such thoughts will help you recognize them and get back to them later when they are important to you.

People whose career focuses on new ideas need to journal. A singer can come up with new lines for their next song, a play or scriptwriter can have a light bulb moment of his/her next play or movie, an author can have an idea of his/her next book or chapter, and many other ideas.

These ideas can pop up in your head at any time. It is important to write them down so when you are ready to work on them you have not forgotten about them. Sometimes it could have been a masterpiece idea and forgetting about it will cause you a lot of pain.

I always have a book and pencil by my side when I am working on a new project. Even though I have a solid work plan on my computer I love to have a book and pencil by my side. This is where I jot down any new ideas that pop up in my head. I can come up with a new execution plan or a new thing I can add to my plan to better my result. You never know just what may pop up in your head.

Then I make a habit of going through my journal frequently as I work on my task to make sure I am not forgetting anything. And in the end, I have a fully completed result that has included even the ideas that came up as I worked on it.

Journal to take your mind off the many things you are thinking about and give you clarity in what you are doing at the moment.

## THERAPEUTIC

Journaling helps you connect with your inner self. You will be in connection with your deepest feelings and be able to express them by writing them down. Many psychologists and therapists encourage journaling. Because you are writing down your thoughts and not letting them haunt you in your mind.

Writing down your thoughts gives you control over them. You are no longer being tormented by them in your mind. Now you can see them and realize that they are not that bad. They do not control you because they are now on paper or in an app. And you can decide what to do about each of them.

Journaling helps you to organize your thoughts. Having so many thoughts at once on your mind can be messy. And it can cause you mental ailments like anxiety because you have fear of being left alone with your thoughts. You do not know what to think about first because every thought is blocking the other.

But when you write them down you even know how many things you are thinking about. You will take away the stress of having all of them on your mind at once and now you can ponder at each at a time.

And you will be able to understand your emotions better. Journaling has helped me get in touch with myself and know what I am thinking about. When I am faced with a situation that challenges my mind I write it down. Writing it helps me realize my emotion towards it. I am able to understand why I acted as I did or why I am having certain thoughts.

These things do not come easily to everyone. I find that past traumatic experiences influence how I react and think about certain issues in my life. This is usually not clear to me when all the thoughts are moving through my mind.

It becomes clearer when I write it down. I am able to connect the dots and have full realization of my emotions. And I am able to work on making myself better to make sure I react better the next time I am faced with a similar situation. This brings me good healing.

The therapeutic nature of keeping a journal is you can relax your mind. All your thoughts, ideas, plans, goals, and other things are written down. You do not have to carry them in your mind with you all the time. Giving you the mental space to ponder over important thoughts.

## IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH

Journaling makes sure you are not alone with your thoughts. Sometimes you can have intrusive negative thoughts. If you allow them to stay in your mind you will be convinced about a lot of negativity. And you will invite mental health problems like anxiety and depression.

Before I found out the therapeutic nature of journaling I was suffering from depression. I have been through some traumatic experiences in my life that made me feel like I was not worth it. These experiences made me lose my life focus and I did not see anything good that could come from me.

I started having episodes where a negative thought would come into my mind and I would dwell on it creating a lot of sadness in my life. These episodes would get me anywhere. I would just be doing other things and the thought would come in my mind and crush me. It would take me away from what I was currently doing.

The worst was when I got these episodes when working on my goals or an assignment. I would end up feeling like I was not good enough. And most times I gave up.

A friend of mine asked me to seek help. I was reluctant at first but after getting to some extreme thoughts like suicide I decided to give therapy a try.

During my first session, my therapist gave me a small notebook and a pen. She said to me, “next time you have one of those episodes, write down what you feel.” I did not know how writing about it was going to solve my problem but I decided to give it a try.

But when I had my next episode and started writing it down I did not believe the things that came out of me. I could not stop writing. All my thoughts were poured out and I felt relief. They were no longer in my mind tormenting me. And after I was done writing I moved on to other things. It



is like I transferred the thoughts from my mind to my notebook and now they were not in my mind making me feel bad.

This is when I discovered my writing talent. The way my thoughts would flow as I journaled made me have more confidence in my writing skills. I started with a blog and slowly upgraded to writing books.

Journaling helped me get rid of all my bottled thoughts. I could express them and get rid of them. Giving my mind rest because I was at ease.

Slowly the anxiety and depression started to fade away. I was no longer scared to be left with my thoughts. Because I could write them down and free up my mind. I no longer felt like a loser.

There is some type of control that you get when you write down your feelings. Having them down on paper makes them realistic. It diminishes their power and gives you back control. And you will have confidence in dealing with them because they are no longer a big thing running through your mind.

## IT IS EASY

Anyone can journal. And with the help of technology, you do not need to walk around with a book and pen. You can have an app that helps you with this that you can open and start writing every time you need to.

And you do not have to be a writer to journal. Just write how you feel. In a way that only you will understand. Your journal is your personal possession. Nobody will tell you what to write in it. This is not a school assignment that will be graded. You are free to express yourself however you want.

## WRITE ABOUT ANYTHING

Your journal can contain anything you want it to. You can write down your daily tasks, weekly food menu, your plans for later in the day, shopping list, phone numbers, etc. Anything you feel like writing down can be written in your journal.

The main aim of journaling is to take away mental fatigue. It will help you take away these thoughts from your mind and you can get back to them when they become a priority.

Journaling will also help you organize your day and consequently your life. It takes away decision fatigue which is caused by having to make decisions all the time. If you keep a food schedule and shopping list you will know what to eat at a particular time and what to buy. So, the decision fatigue of having to figure this out will be gone. Your days will run smoothly because you are not constantly making small decisions here and there.

## PRIORITIZE

Writing down everything will help you see what is important and what is not. Your priorities will become clear and you will not be stressing yourself out on what is not important to you.

You can write down your goals in your journal. And what you intend to do to achieve them. Your action plan becomes clearer and makes your goals feel achievable. When you write things down you are able to break them down into consumable chunks. So each step feels doable to you.

And in turn, your confidence will be boosted and you will be able to save a lot of time and money. Because you are not on a trial and error quest. You know what you want and what you need to do to get it.



## TAKE TIME TO REST AND MEDITATE

What is the quality of your sleep? Are you getting enough of it? Do you have a sleep schedule? Does falling asleep come easy to you?

Your sleep is very important. Sleeping is the best way to rest. Quality sleep means enough rest. And your mind and body will be recharged giving you the energy to perform your tasks.

I know that there is a notion in society that people who sleep less because they are working are more likely to be successful. This is a misconception that is far away from the truth.

Your mind and body need rest if you want to be successful.

To declutter your mind you need to get rid of the stress and baggage that is wearing you down. And one of these burdens is being tired. If you are tired then you do not function well. Your productivity goes down and that success you are working towards will not come.

Contrary to common belief, sleep makes you more successful. You will be able to rest and recharge. This means you will have more energy to work on your goals. Your plans will be easy to execute because your mind will have the rest it needs to start working again. Your body will also have enough energy to move around as you wanted it to.

## SLEEP SCHEDULE

It is important to have a sleep schedule. I suggest that you make one. Have a specific sleep time and waking up time every day. This will make sure your body becomes accustomed to resting at a particular time every day.

Write down your sleep times in your schedule. And these are not free hours. It does not mean that if you have other things to do you start deducting the time from your sleep hours to get to these tasks. Respect your sleeping time.

A few minutes before you go to sleep, take time to prepare yourself for bed. Take a shower if you have to, brush your teeth, finish up your skincare routine, get into your pajamas, and go to bed.

Do not let your sleep time reach yet you have not completed these tasks. You want to train your mind and body to fall asleep at a particular time every day and wake up at the same time every day. This will make sure you are getting rid of sleep vices like oversleeping. Too much of everything, even the good things, is poisonous. I want you to have enough sleep, not too much sleep.

Scheduling your sleeping hours and sticking to them will make sure you are getting quality sleep. And quality sleep means you are well rested to take on your new tasks for the day. You will get rid of brain fog that causes you to have delayed thoughts and poor memory recollection.

When I was a young man at my first job, fresh from college, I remember reading a self-help book. It was written by a motivational speaker that was giving tips on how to become successful in life. There was a whole topic about how sleeping eight hours a day was detrimental to your success.

I need you to be keen and see something here. The motivational speaker was not concerned about his readers' health. He was focusing on their

success. It said in that chapter that you cannot be successful if you sleep eight hours a day because that is a third of your day. You need to be up doing things that will bring you your success.

Now I am no specialist when it comes to how many hours you have to sleep. But do you think two hours of sleep every day is bringing you justice? Is it fair to yourself?

When I read this book I was determined to reduce my sleeping hours and to always work all the time. First of all, I was working towards nothing because I had no plans and no goals. And secondly, I became a robot working on autopilot. Always had a coffee in my hands. Because I needed it to stay awake and to be able to function.

My mind and body were tired. I could not handle even the simplest of tasks. And I became the guy at the office that slept during meetings. My life became meaningless because I was always tired and was constantly looking forward to the end of the day so I could go home.

Yes I was sleeping fewer hours as per the author's instructions, but I had no purpose for my life. And I was not working towards anything.

Healthy rest will give you energy and ensure you have no gaps between your mind and body. When you are not well-rested, your mind and body are not in sync because they are not communicating with each other. This creates a gap and undermines your productivity.



## MEDITATION

Meditation connects your mind with what you love and all that you do. Many aspects of your life become clearer when you start to meditate. You will be able to connect with your innermost feelings and understand why different things in your life are as they are.

On your journey to decluttering your life, meditation will help clear a lot of things for you and make the whole journey easier. Decluttering your life will need you to do away with items in your life that you do not need. Meditation will help you with this. You will be able to reflect on your life and see what you need to live comfortably. Everything else that is not needed can be done away with.

This is the best way to solve many problems in your life. Meditating connects your mind and soul. You do not necessarily have to be seated with your legs crossed on a yoga mat for you to meditate. Meditation can happen anywhere and at any time. You just need to clear your mind and focus on what you are thinking about.

With your problems, meditating on them will help you realize the root cause. You will be able to remember how the problem started and see how it has impacted your life. How you deal with issues around it will become clearer. And now that you know how it started you can go back to the roots and uproot it to take it out of your life.

## MINDFULNESS

Meditation will awaken your understanding of different aspects of your life. And you will be able to work on yourself better because you will be mindful of all that has to do with you and what is around you.

As you meditate you become more conscious and aware of many things. And you will be able to grow yourself and bring in positivity into your life.

One thing I love about meditating is that I can look into negative habits that I have in my life. I meditate on them and realize their root cause. Then I can work on removing the habit and replacing it with a positive habit. Because I know the root cause of the negative behavior I can recall why I started acting that way in the first place. And I can visit that time in my life and find ways to change for the better.

Mindfulness will help you get rid of negative attachments you have with items or people in your life that you do not need. Meditation will help you know yourself better and know what you need for your comfort. You will now be mindful of all you do not need and it will be easier to let them go.

## DECLUTTERING

Your decluttering process will become a lot easier. Most times in your life you may be holding back from decluttering because you have an unhealthy sentimental attachment to people or things that do not matter in your life.

It is normal to have this attachment. It shows that you care. But you need to let these people and things go. Some people are toxic in your life and are causing your downfall. And the items you do not need are sitting on your space and causing disorganization and congestion.

You can sell them and earn money or you can gift them to people that will make better use of them.

By meditating you will know what is attaching you to people in your life that do not bring positive impact. You will be able to deal with the problem from its roots.

I know I did not want to give up my friends at first because they were my identity. I felt like I was only relevant when people associated me with them. It is more of saying that I was the accessory in the friendship. I cannot be worn alone, but I am there to make the clothing complete. Like a scarf.

Meditation helped me to be mindful of this. I decided to hold myself in high accord. And to stop undermining myself by thinking I was only relevant when associated with these people. I am my own identity and my worth in this world is enough to make me stand out. I do not need anyone else to make me relevant.

Another reason I did not want to declutter is I feared my future after it. Especially my friends. How would my life be now that they were not in it? How will I know what to do now that there is no one to tell me what to do? Who will I be without them?

The fear of the future is the worst kind. It will make you hang on to the past and neglect the present. If you do not declutter then you are hanging on to the past. It is past because this is a part of you that is not needed anymore. If you hang on to it then you are missing out on the beautiful present.

Your present has many opportunities that will shape your future. Letting go of the unnecessary will help you see all the opportunities you have in the present clearly.

## CONNECTION TO WHAT YOU LOVE

Mediating will make you connect with what you love. First you will be able to know what you love. Then you will be able to concentrate on it. There is no greater joy in life than finding out what you love.

The things you love are dear to your heart. Performing tasks that are in line with them will be enjoyable. This is why people are always advised to work in fields that match their interests. Because you will not feel like you are working but you will feel like you are doing what you love.

The feeling of waking up every day to go to work will be exciting. You will not have problems with waking up in the morning to prepare for what you have to do. Ideas will flow easily and you will be more intentional with getting good results.

Because you are mindful of what you need, there will be no clutter in your life that is slowing you down. You will have enough time to work on your interests because nothing is coming in between you and them.

Clutter has a way of taking our focus from the important things. You end up dwelling on the clutter and finding ways to make it comfortable in your life. While you should be living your best life with only what you love and doing only what you love.

Sleep and meditation are aimed at giving your mind and body rest. And rest is very important if you want to accomplish a lot in your life. There will be no point in being successful but your mind and body are ailing. You will not be able to enjoy all that you have achieved because you will be busy working on getting your health back on track.

You will be using the resources you have gathered to pay for medical care and will be spending most of your time in one hospital after another. Looking for expert advice on your migraines and a permanent solution to your back issues.

Just give yourself time to rest every day to get rid of these issues. You will be more energetic to enjoy what you have and you will be able to come up with ways to make more.

Prioritize your rest and meditation time. Let them be a need in your life and take the time you are doing this seriously. And you will watch yourself start recording more success and more growth.

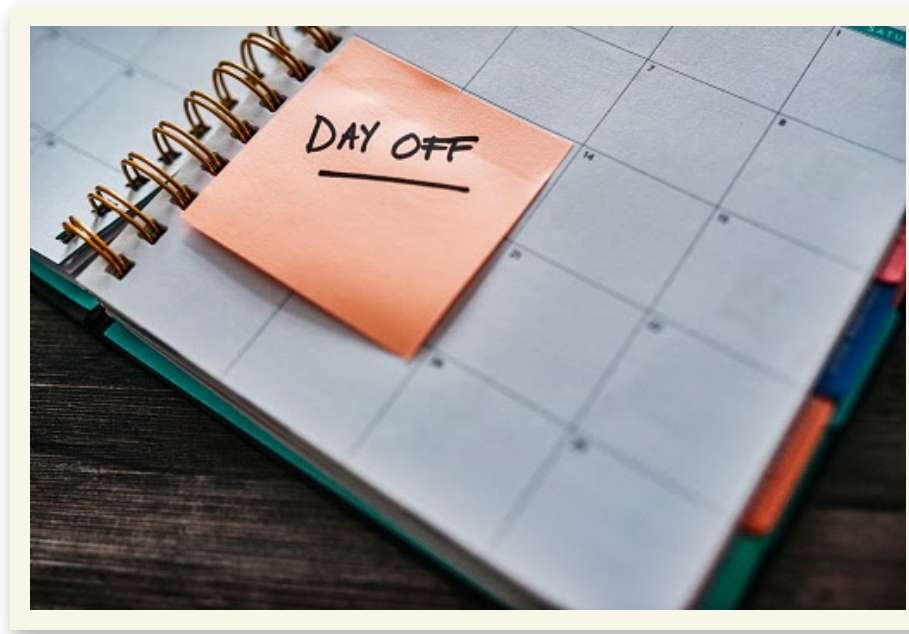
Get yourself a nice and comfortable bed and buy comfortable sheets and pajamas. Meditate a few minutes before you sleep to clear your mind. If you go to sleep with a lot on your mind you will miss out on quality rest because your thoughts will not give you the freedom to fall asleep. You will be dozing off and waking up to another thought that is dominating your mind.



## TAKE A TIME-OUT

**R**est is an important factor in your life. It helps you declutter and recharge so you can achieve more. When you rest you become energized. And your mind is cleared of all things making it possible for you to have clear thoughts.

Apart from sleep, there are other ways you can rest and relax the body. This includes taking time out. What this entails is you keeping a distance from your normal work to relax.



This is when you go to the gym, meet your friends for a barbeque, go play tennis or golf, play chess, and many other activities that will make you relax. Take part in a hobby. We all have hobbies. Find out what yours is and carve out time when you unplug from everything else and indulge in it.

Your hobbies take your mind away from your daily life's work and allow your mind to think about other things. This is like a small detox when the mind can exercise its thinking skills in other sectors. Overindulging in the same thing day in day out causes a lot of redundancy in life.



You will be thinking and doing the same thing over and over again day in day out. That is bound to get boring. Shake things up a little by going out dancing and take your mind off everything else.

When you do this often you will find yourself loving your life even more. You have given your mind the time to do other things and now it is ready to indulge in your work.

## VACATIONS

Another way you can take time off is to go on vacation. A change of scenery is a blessing. You take time to change your location and experience new things that will refresh and rejuvenate you.

I find that vacations uplift my spirit. The fact that I worked to earn the money that is paying for the vacation is a satisfying feeling. I have always wanted to have the finer things in life. And traveling to different places has always been something I dreamt to do since I was a young boy.

My parents were not so into traveling. We rarely took trips growing up and I promised myself that I would change that for me one day. And that my children will have the opportunity to visit as many places as they can.



I am one person that is always looking forward to going on vacation. Every new year you will see me filling in a bucket list of the places I would like to visit that year. I try not to repeat the places I visited unless it is

somewhere we absolutely loved and would like to enjoy the experience again.

I even have a vacation savings account where I save towards my vacations. This has made it easier for me to plan a vacation because I have money for it.

And let us thank a minute to be grateful for travel agencies. They have made the whole process so easy. All I do is call Liz, my travel consultant, and ask her to recommend good places to visit that year. I look up these places online and see what will be more fun and enjoyable. Then I book my vacations and start counting down the days until we get to go. Yes, I love vacations that much.

## SCHEDULE YOUR TIME-OUT

It is important to schedule your time-out or else you will find the daily hustle of life catching up with you. There are always a lot of activities and tasks that we have to get to every day in our lives. And most times taking time away from all the craze can be hard.

One thing you need to appreciate is that responsibilities will never end. One responsibility gives birth to twenty more. So, unless you plan your “getaways” you will always find yourself too busy to take time off. It will feel absurd to want to go on vacation during such a moment in your life when a lot is going on.

But the importance of vacation is to avoid burnout. If you are not intentional towards your time-out then you will find yourself working all day every day seven days a week, three-sixty-five days in a year. And you do not want this.

Everyone needs rest. This is the only way to recharge and get back our energy to be able to move forward. Your mind needs time when it is not thinking about anything and is just at rest. Even if you have your sleeping schedule right you need to have a change of scenery once in a while for a few days.

When you write down your time out in your daily schedule and mark out your vacation days, you will be able to honor your commitment to them. Because you will schedule everything else around them. You are not leaving your time out for your remaining time after everything else has been slotted. I find it important to start with scheduling your time out then add the other things later.

Working every day will not bring you success. You need time to rest. So schedule this time.

## TURN OFF YOUR APPLIANCES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

I just heard you ask me in your head how this is possible in the digital world. It is very possible. And I will tell you why you need it and how you can do it.

### **Why**

You need a break from the notifications. Yes, you do not know it but they impact your life negatively too. Imagine a life where every day you are receiving a notification about things you need to do. Does this not get tiring?

First thing when you wake up in the morning to switch off your alarm you see the many reminders and emails pop up on your screen. It is not fun. You did not even have time to meditate on yourself and your day yet.

When you are taking time off, turn off your appliances. Give your full attention to the activities that are helping you relax. This does not have to be something hard to do. Actually, it should be easy.

Imagine if you are playing chess, which we know requires a lot of thinking, and you are constantly checking on your phone and attending to all notifications that pop up. Are you doing yourself any justice?

Maybe you were one step away from the checkmate. But now you forgot your move, or you have not realized you were that close and your opponent wins.

I used to carry my laptop with me when I went on vacation. And I remember telling my assistant to send me emails from work and I would work on them when I was away. I did not know that all I was doing was shifting the location of work from my office to this hotel room in another country.

Here I am on vacation but I am hurrying to respond to emails and work on proposals and projects. I missed out on having time with my family.

When we were leaving for the vacation I would tell my children that I would teach them to do something. But immediately we got there, I allowed myself to be immersed in work and I did not even have time to do any of the things I promised.

It was heartbreaking to see the disappointed looks on my children's faces when we were checking out and I did not help them with anything. Then I promised to make it up to them only to get back home and dive back into work. One day I looked at my sons and saw how much they had grown up and I was mad at myself for missing out on many important seasons of their life.

This is when the need to unplug became evident. I needed to take time off and spend some quality time with my family. And by taking time off I mean that I needed to turn off my appliances and my social media every time we had family time. It was important for my family that I disconnect with the world and reconnect with them.

When my mind was focused on them then we would be able to spend quality time together. I was now the guy that my assistant would tell clients was on vacation. It felt good to come back to the office after my vacation to see that everything went on as usual and nothing stopped because I was not there for a few days.

So they could function without me smoothly for a few days. It was refreshing to see that delegating work to other people is an effective tool for decluttering. You give other people tasks that you cannot perform at the moment.

## HOW

This is a very easy, yet very hard process. It requires a lot of due diligence. Remember that you are taking time off to declutter your mind and unwind. You are giving your mind and body a break from the hustle to focus on other things.

Let us start with your appliances. Your laptop does not have to come with you during your time out. You should not have it during vacations or short staycations. Leave it at home or the office. As long as you delegate all important tasks to other people that will take care of them you have nothing to worry about.

I find it good to take time away from the office and let other people handle the important tasks. It gives me joy to see that my teachings and training of my staff have been internalized and they can function without me.

It is good to see that everything will be handled and when you come back all you need is for your assistant to fill you in. And all other things that required your attention have been put on hold until your return.

You should also disable notifications on your phone. This way your phone will not be buzzing with one notification after another and catching your attention. You will be able to forget your phone for the time you are out there and have more time to enjoy it.

The essence of taking your mind off work will be lost if each time you look at your phone you are getting a notification from work.

Now let us talk about social media. By now we all know the impact social media has on us. It is an addictive pool that keeps pulling us in. If you allow yourself to browse through your social media platforms you will not be able to enjoy your time out. Rather you will be wasting your time

scrolling and looking at other people's feeds and you will not fully indulge in the activities you had gone to participate in.

I know that we all want to post beautiful pictures of where we are. You want people to see the beautiful place that will be your home for a few days. And you want to post nice selfies of yourself. This is okay. But do not make this the only thing you do.

Social media is addictive. And the more you post, the more comments you get. These comments will propel you to want to post more. And you will find yourself only taking pictures to update your feed all the time. This is unhealthy. You will be connected to the social media world and disconnected from the current physical world you are in.

I am sure you can post all these pictures after. They will still be relevant. People will still comment on your good selfie and call you beautiful. It does not mean that because you are posting it later then it is irrelevant. It is delayed gratification. You have decided to take your time to enjoy yourself in the activities you are indulging in. And you have taken a few necessary pictures.

Afterward, you can post them. After you have enjoyed everything and have achieved the relaxation you wanted. Everybody wins. The social media you and the human you.

As much as our daily work is what is bringing success in our lives it is important to have time away from it all. The mind appreciates thinking about new things and being in a different location. This is how it gets maximum rest and can be able to recharge better. Your energy levels will be increased.

Because you are taking the time to do activities that make you happy. Once in a while take time out with your genuine friends and enjoy a good laugh together. Sit and reminisce on old memories and make new ones. Make new memories with your family members and enjoy each other's company.



It will also have a positive impact on your mental and physical health because you avoided the burnout of working all day every day.



## CONCLUSION

Decluttering your life allows you to live a better-quality life. Because you have taken away the unnecessary baggage that you have been carrying around in your life. Most times all this baggage may be oblivious to you but you are feeling its effects. Some of them cause poor health and a lack of growth in your life.

Everyone wants to grow in their life. We all want to achieve our goals and have success. I am yet to meet someone that does not want to experience the joy of being associated with success because of something good that they did. I usually have mental pictures of someone giving me a medal and putting it around my neck every time I have an achievement.

You have been brave to choose to declutter your life. But you will be even braver if you implement in your life all that you have learned in the chapters above. Remember that the process of decluttering your life is unique to everyone.

The way one person does it may not benefit you. It is important to find ways that work for you as you do this. To make sure you are getting the full benefits in your life. Just like you play around with the rules of a diet to find your perfect fit.

Start by having a schedule. Do not go into your day blindly and have all the tasks and activities of the day hitting you head-on. A schedule will keep you organized. It will help you make sure that you are working on all your important tasks and giving them the attention they need.

Decluttering your life will lead you to a life of financial freedom. You will stop spending your money on unnecessary items and ventures that make no sense in your life. You will start living your life with intention. All that you purchase will be a need that is coming in to improve the quality of your life.

You will become more intentional with your savings and investments. Now that you have enough money to save you can invest in assets that will bring you more money. As long as you invest in a good asset and you take care of your investment, it will always fetch you more money. And good money for that.

Remember that no one will hire you and pay you one billion dollars. It is your efforts and how you use the resources that are available to you that will get you there.

Keep good friends that are genuinely in your life because they love you. Not people that are in constant competition with you and are working to bring you down. A friend is someone that waters your garden to help in your growth. And you should water theirs too.

When everyone in the group is winning, then your friendship will be more enjoyable. It is not fair to have people in the group that are suffering yet you can help them grow and attain their success. Your own success will not be undermined by that of others. Rather it will be more relevant and uplifted. Because two heads are better than one and you will all be able to sit and talk about ways to grow even more.

Toxic friendships are draining and need to be eliminated from your life fully. Be very careful about who you are letting into your life. Let them be people that are going to accept you for who you are and are constantly working to help you become better.

It is important to your life and your health that you unplug and take time to rest. This is the time your mind and body take to recharge. And you will be able to think better about your plans. I find myself coming up with better plans when I am relaxed. My mind is able to think out of the box and explore other options and new ways of doing things.

When the mind is tired it only thinks of things that are common to it. But when you have rest you can think more and out of the box. You can

expand your territories and not limit yourself. And your plan will be amazing and it will lead you to good and successful results.

Your mental and physical health is also protected because you are not allowing yourself to reach burnout. Your body and mind are getting the rest they require before they start working robotically and on autopilot mode.

The need to make assertive decisions has been analyzed in this book. You need to get away from decision fatigue because you are overwhelmed by all the decisions you have to make in a day. And your decisions should be made assertively in ways that people understand them and respect them.

Stick to the new schedule you created for yourself when you decluttered your life. Because right now your mind has no baggage. And you are in the best shape you can be meaning that you are achieving a lot.

Your success, health, and growth matter a lot. Never undermine them for temporary pleasures that bring no positive impact on your life.



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SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE AND BECOME A  
HOME MINIMALIST

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TIPS ON LIVING STRATEGIES THAT WILL HELP YOU  
ORGANIZE YOUR HOUSE INTO LIVE A COZY LIFE

*“In our overcrowded homes today, most possessions are not truly  
“belongings.” They are only distracting us from the things that do belong.”*

*Joshua Becker*



## INTRODUCTION

What is the first thing you feel when you get home? Does it feel like home? Does the thought of going back to your house at the end of your work day excite you? Would you rather be in your house than anywhere else?

Are you deeply connected with your home space that everything in it reflects your personality? This is what home minimalism is about. It is connecting with the space in your home and only filling it with necessary items that fit your personality.

If it fits your personality that means that it helps you live your life comfortably. And if an item brings your life comfort then it is an essential making it a need.

Your home is where you get to be most vulnerable. Because you are in a space surrounded by items that you possess. Being somewhere you own makes you the boss so you can be yourself and not have to put up a face. Your space should be as comfortable as possible if you want to achieve this level of relaxation.

If you do not trust your home then relaxing and sleeping in it will be a problem. You will not be able to get to your vulnerable state. By vulnerable, I mean that you are removing all the masks you wear to cover up your true emotions and being yourself.

Anything can happen to you when you are in a vulnerable state. Failing to trust your home could lead you to develop conditions like insomnia because you cannot fall asleep and prolonged fatigue because your body is unable to relax.

Minimalism currently is a lifestyle that everyone wants. Go online and you will find everyone talking about their minimalist journey. Furniture stores have changed their marketing narratives to better suit the evolving trend and are now mainly selling products that will help you achieve minimalism.

Even interior decorators are now guiding people on how to organize their homes in a minimalist way to give it a fresh and amazing look. This is every home minimalist's dream. Having a home with clean and fresh decoration and beautiful organization.

I recently saw a jewelry store release their "minimalism collection" and I was amazed. The collection includes watches, earrings, rings, bracelets, necklaces, and anklets. This goes to show how many people are embracing the life of living by their needs only.

This is the reason minimalism is trending and gaining more and more followers every day. More so minimalism in the home. People are being more intentional with what is in their houses. They want to make sure that they have only what they need and are taking out the excess.

A few years ago, I did not like my home. In fact, I hardly even recognized it as a home. The reason behind this was that I always felt like I had walked into a dump every time I walked through the front door of my house. It was an annoying feeling and I was comfortable being anywhere else than being in my house. I was always sleeping over at my friends' and family's house all the time to a point where most of my possessions were scattered in all their houses.

I felt that my house had a lot of unnecessary things in it. But I did not know that this was what I was feeling at the time. I was oblivious to why I kept feeling like my house was a dump. It is hard to find something you do not know you are searching for.

All through this time I had a yearning of having my own space but did not understand why my house did not give me that feeling. I already had my space but it did not feel like I did. I moved to another house but even after I did I ended up with the same feelings after a short period of time. And I went back to my sleepover habits.

But after getting a family of my own I knew I could no longer keep this up. I thought that the loneliness of living on my own was causing my



resentment feelings. Probably my family would make my house feel like home. But that did not happen. My feelings of resentment towards my home were still there. And it was worse now because I could not run off to other people's houses.

I had not dealt with the root cause of my problem which was having non-essential items in my home. All these items had congested my home. And I was feeling claustrophobia. Because I was living in a congested home.

It was after I discovered minimalism and read about being a home minimalist that my life changed for the better in so far as my space was concerned. This is when I understood my feelings. My mind and body were repelling my house because it had a lot of items that were not important to me. And it was not personalized to fit my needs.

The reason why staying over at other people's houses was easier was because I was able to get my needs there. My house was not my foundation. Your home should always be your foundation. It is the first place you are everyday where you prepare for your day. If you do not have a good foundation then you will be letting yourself into the world with the wrong attitude and unprepared.

Becoming a minimalist made it easier for me to connect with myself. I was now able to understand my life and know what I needed to live comfortably. When I came to changing my home to a minimalist home, the process was easy because I knew what I needed.

I got rid of all the non-essential items in my space and was able to concentrate on the important things. Coming home every day became something I was constantly looking forward to. Because my home became my safe haven. It was somewhere I was able to be alone and have clear thoughts because there was not a lot going on at the same time in my space.

Home minimalism helped turn my house into a warm home.

The journey to home minimalism requires patience and a positive attitude. You should have a liberal mindset and be open-minded to all that you will encounter in your journey. It is a journey where you will learn a lot about yourself. Keeping a positive mind will help you accept what you learn as you make changes for yourself.

There are many times I was discouraged during my journey. Many of the pictures I saw on home minimalism had barely any furniture in the house. All my life I have lived a life where wealth was defined by how much “good” furniture you had in your home. Changing my mindset from this was not easy.

But I got to understand that all that was surrounding me was influencing my state of mind making it impossible for me to even think or complete even the simplest tasks like cleaning.

All the baggage clogging up my space was also affecting my health because cleaning was a heavy task. There was just so much to move around. Having all these items in my home which I initially thought I needed was not doing me any good.

After decluttering, completing tasks became easy. It was easier to keep my space clean and organized. I now had knowledge of everything that was surrounding me.

This book will give you tips and ways you can achieve a minimalist home. It will teach you how to be mindful of all that surrounds you and how to make your home a sweet and calm environment.

You will receive useful tips and guides that will help you elevate the heaviness of restructuring your home to a minimalist home. The key tip is to have a positive attitude and keep an open mind throughout the whole process. Look out for what you will discover and be open to it. All these things are here to help you live your life better.

Becoming a home minimalist should be something exciting for you. It should be something that you look forward to because this way of living

will ensure your success.

Remember that the whole idea of minimalism is living by what you need. Being a home minimalist will ensure that all you do not need is not in your home. This is a way of accepting that your life is only about concentrating on what is important to your well-being and growth.

You need to embrace this lifestyle because as I said this is the best way to organize your home and remove the congestion. As long as all the baggage is still in your home, you will have a hard time coming up with ways to grow yourself.

The baggage is bringing confusion into your life. And once you are confused the path going forward will always be foggy.

Make the decision to change today for your own good. The tips in this book are what helped me in my journey and brought me success in my home minimalist journey. They helped shape my attitude and how I approached the whole situation. I am sure that they will be of help to you too. If you follow the tips you will find the whole journey enjoyable and you will fall in love with the end results.



## KEEPING IT SIMPLE BY HAVING LESS THAT EQUATES TO MORE

The 'less is more' principle is the backbone of home minimalism. The minimalist lifestyle is about living by what you need for your comfort. Being a home minimalist means that everything you have in your home is only what you need. The little you have equates to more for you because it is what is most important to your life.

In essence you are not even viewing what you have as little but as enough. Because it is serving all sectors of your life just right.

To achieve home minimalism, you have to fully understand and embrace this 'less is more' concept.

Everything in your home that you do not need, no matter how pretty it is, will still be considered clutter. It is making no positive impact in your life and fills your space.

The importance of having less is that you will also be in connection with all that you own. It even takes care of your mental health. The lesser the stressful objects in your space, the lesser the strain posed to your mental health.

When I decided to become a home minimalist I remember quitting after my first attempt. The concept of doing away with most of my possessions just did not sit right with me. I imagined all the money I had spent to purchase the items and the days I spent saving to be able to afford them. What made it worse is I always reflected back to the ad that marketed the item to me. I convinced myself that the lady or man that advertised it promised me that the item was a necessity in my life so I did not need to do away with it.

But what I came to realize is that most of the items in my house had turned into clutter. I did not use them and some of them were long forgotten. The worst thing is my important possessions were buried away

under the unnecessary items and reaching them became hard. I had to work my way through so much to get to them.

At that time, I wish I had a book like this where someone actually told me of his/her struggles with becoming a home minimalist. Most of the information I got online was of bloggers, YouTubers, and authors that were so proud of their achievement but who did not share any challenges they faced.

This is common in the world we live in today. We miss out on connecting with our clients personally because our main aim is making a sale to earn more money.

Through my journey I taught myself that having less actually meant I had more because all my important items were there with me. And I was able to retain the natural space of my house. I started appreciating the space because before my constant complaint was how my house was so small for all my possessions.

By understanding that less is more you will devote your life to only purchasing what you will use. Everything in your home will be there to serve a specific purpose not to be stored away to collect dust and fill up your space.

And having less does not mean having the bare minimum. This is a common misapprehension of minimalism that most people have. I am here to tell you that this notion is false. Minimalism will never have you living with the bare minimum. If you are a minimalist and you are living like this then you are doing it all wrong.

Always remember that minimalism is about getting your needs. Getting everything that you need to live comfortably. So at every time you should have enough of your needs to make sure you are comfortable. You have less because you only have what you need for your comfort. And all other wants and luxuries are items you do not purchase or own.

Understanding this will make your home minimalist journey a lot easier. Because you will focus on getting into your home only what you need rather than unnecessary luxuries that will just give you the stress of maintaining them.

## KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

It is very important to be aware of your needs. You cannot be a minimalist if your needs are oblivious to you. Because the whole idea of being a minimalist is living by what you need.

As time changes so do our needs change. It is possible to have more needs later in your life than you do now. And it is also possible for a need to turn into something that is no longer important to you. You should constantly examine yourself at all stages in your life to know what is useful to you at that particular time.

The technique that has been working for me and keeping me informed about my needs is keeping a spreadsheet record of all my needs. Initially I started by making lists in my notebook which I later upgraded to spreadsheets on my laptop.

Keeping a list has helped me become an informed shopper. I never shop blindly because I always know what I need to pick from the store. By doing this I have been able to do away with needless spendings.

A spreadsheet can be stored on your phone or tablet making it accessible to you at all times. You can pull it up whenever and refer to what you need.

When you are in the process of figuring out what you need in your home to live comfortably, I advise that you go through the whole house literally. Do not just sit on the chair and jog your mind to see what you have and decide what is a need. It is easy to forget a lot that you already own. Especially if your home is full of clutter.

Go room by room. When in a room, look through everything that is in it. Open the boxes and look through the closets and cupboards. Write down everything that is there.



Take your time when doing this. You are not obligated to finish the task in a few hours or a day. Take enough time so you do not become tired and quit the whole process altogether.

After completing this you should then sit down with your list and go through each item. Ask yourself these questions about each item:

- What does this do for me?
- When was the last time I used it?
- Did I remember that I owned it before I saw it in the room?
- Is it important to my life's comfort?

At this point, you can come up with additional lists. Have a list of what you need and what is not important to you.

Categorize the items into these two lists. You can also have an additional list labeled "I am not sure list". This is a list of items that you need to debate on more. Do not feel bad about having this list.

I do not want you to live with the bare minimum. And I do not want your house to have boring things in it. Take a reasonable time to think about them and come up with a wise decision about it.

Having less does not mean doing away with most of what you have and only remaining with a few things. You need to be sure that what is staying with you is what you need to live comfortably. And that you are getting rid of items that add no value to your life.

Imagine if you gave out something and later in the future realize that it was actually of importance to you. This will make you spend more money purchasing another similar item. I want you to avoid such a situation at all costs. Your money is precious because you worked to earn it and it should never be wasted.

You can decide to be repeating this process yearly or twice every year. As I said, your needs will change with time. Maybe when you last made a

list of your needs you did not have children and now you have a daughter or a son. Your needs automatically change when your life changes to parenthood. As such your “needs list” needs to be updated too.

I am insisting on lists because I hate the concept of “winging it” when it comes to your needs. A lot of thought has to go into them and you cannot afford to make mistakes. Because mistakes mean having little of what you need and more of the unnecessary which is a step back in our quest to have a minimalist home.

## HAVE BEAUTIFUL THINGS

I am sure you have come across pictures of minimalist homes and you have seen just how beautiful the decor and furniture are.

Having less does not mean retaining the boring. We are lucky to be living in a world where everyone is being innovative to create the best version of a product. It is not like before where manufacturers did not care about the look of their final products because they had no competition. And you would buy their product no matter how it looks because you could not get it anywhere else.

You want your home to be beautiful so that you feel relaxed and excited every time you are home. The less you are staying with should be interesting and beautiful in your eyes. Living by less and what you need should not be boring. Make it exciting by surrounding yourself with beautiful versions of the products you have.

## PRIORITIZE

Now that you have a clear list of what you need the next step is to learn how to prioritize your needs. This is always easier said than done, especially for beginners but it is not impossible. You need to change your mindset and tune it towards prioritizing your needs.

My experience was that I found it hard to stop myself from buying the beautiful things I saw at the stores. I know you know what I mean. Sometimes you walk into a store to buy something and you decide to take a tour around the store. Maybe you are not even taking a tour, you just bump into something beautiful and you think about how cool you will be to have it. Or you just see something sitting on the shelves and imagine how it will be of help to you. This happened to me a lot back in the day when I had no priorities.

Well if it is not a priority do not take it to the checkout counter. You will not die if you do not have it. Actually, you will live longer because you will not have the stress of taking care of it.

We are living in a digital, dynamic world with a lot of marketing. It is not like before where advertisements were on billboards and on TV only. Right now, we have to skip an ad before watching a video on YouTube. We need to wait for ads to finish playing to move to the next level in a game.

Ads are everywhere because everyone is an influencer of a brand these days. Marketers have found it easier to market their products by partnering with local and international celebrities. The celebrity is tasked with showing his/her followers how the product has brought comfort in their life.

The world has evolved to a point of accommodating many brands of the same product. We have many toothpaste and diaper brands today that are being marketed everywhere. All these companies are making use of influencers to market their products for the.

If one advert does not interest you I bet the next one will. The people marketing are always so convincing. Because you now know what your needs are you should not fall for these marketing schemes. Always ask yourself if their products are your needs. If not you have to move along and not purchase them.

Item purchase has become easier in the world today. Almost every store is dealing in all items and there are developed online platforms to help you get what you want. You do not have to leave your home. The online shopping platform has delivery services where they bring the item to you. It is important to use these platforms consciously to make sure you are not binge spending and buying items you do not need.

I am a shopaholic and I know how stopping yourself from adding something to the cart is really hard. Especially the finely packaged goods or the items with a discount mark on them. It is like they are calling your name and promising to be good when you buy them.

You need to find a way to help you resist the temptation. I found it easier to do this when I deleted all my online shopping applications on my phone and tablet.

When I have to purchase a need from an online store, I access it from my laptop. This way I spend less time going through other things that the store has to offer and resist the temptation of logging in to my online shopping apps when I am bored.

Think of it this way, you will never enjoy something that is not a need for you. It will only be used for a short while then you will forget about it. The item will remain in your space contributing to the congestion. It is better to refrain from purchasing it than allowing it to congest your space.

If you start purchasing items that are not needed you will make a habit of it. You will look at your life and think about how the last purchase did not harm anything in your life. So the next one will do you no harm either.

But all these items will accumulate and become clutter. The space you are working hard to create and organize will be ruined. You can avoid this if you stick to your needs.

Having too much is toxic. All the things cluttering your space will also clutter your mind. It has been proven that our state of mind resembles our surroundings. If you live in a congested place then your state of mind will be congested. Thinking will become hard and you will be constantly tired.

Having what you need means you have enough to live comfortably. This is where the less is more concept becomes reasonable because you have everything you need at your disposal.

## MORE SPACE

Living by the 'less is more' concept will allow you to have more space in your home. You will not have to pay for a gym because you have no space in your home to do your yoga. Now there is space for you to stretch as much and as far as you want.

You will appreciate the size of your home. Do not think of this as something small. The space will be therapeutic. Remember that your state of mind reflects your surroundings. If your space is congested your mind will also be congested. You will never have peace of mind because you constantly have a lot going through your mind at the same time.

The space will make being home peaceful. There is not a lot going on. And the place is simple. Everything is within your reach and you can be organized. You may never achieve great organization if your home is constantly filled with many things. No matter how much you try your space will always look and feel cluttered.

A congested home will make you lazy. Who wants to be moving around a million and one things just to clean the small space they sit on? I remember telling myself every time I was cleaning that I would reach the unreached areas next time when I had more energy. But that was just a lie because I said the same thing to myself again the next time I cleaned. My home was always cleaned in patches avoiding the crowded areas.

Now that all the unnecessary items are out you will have space for the important things. And all your items will remain in good condition because they are not being squeezed or stacked together to make room for something else. And you will have the time to enjoy the benefits of all your important possessions.

## CUT DOWN ON COST

The amount of money you will save by living on what is important will amaze you. When I started living my life intentionally by paying attention to my needs only, I realized just how much I was wasting on the needless items. By cutting off the unnecessary in my life I had money left from my income to save.

The money I was sparing was enough for me to save towards unexpected events and venture in investments that would earn me financial freedom.

I also realized that I was spending a lot of money on luxuries and not my needs. Now that I had more money with me, I could afford them. I was so excited about this because I constantly lived with the fear of not having enough money to supply my needs. All I was doing was wasting my resources on things that were not important to me.



## MORE TIME

If you understand that less is more then you will only be filling your life with what is important. And you will save your resource of time. Do you know just how precious your time is? Ever heard the phrase “*time is money*”? Your time is that precious because it can be used on things that will bring you growth.

There are no extra and unnecessary possessions for you to worry about anymore. You will have more time to spend with what is important to you. Use this time to better yourself. Read books, go back to school and learn a new skill or perfect the ones you already have by getting a Masters or PHD.

There is more space in your home and life now to accommodate these activities, so go for them.

Having less is good for you especially if you have a busy life. Like if you are a parent. Sometimes taking care of the children can take a lot from you and you will not have time to care for other things. When you only have what is important to you it will be possible to take care of all that is in your care in a short period of time.

## PEACE

Peace, happiness, joy, and relaxation will be part of your life after doing away with the unnecessary items. Because your life will now be exempted from the stress of living in a congested environment. Your needs will constantly be supplied and you will have enough money to take care of other areas in your life.

It will feel like you have been given a new life with no baggage. And you will enjoy the new life.

The quality of your sleep will be improved. It is quite difficult to sleep well in a congested room. There is no fresh air circulation and the items collect dust which is harmful to you. You may suffer from respiratory ailments by living like this.

Your home should be somewhere you can get deep and quality sleep. And becoming a home minimalist will help you with this 100%.



## PERSONALIZE YOUR HOME

Being a home minimalist is about simplifying your life and what is in your home. The aim of this is to leave you with only what you need to remain comfortable. This is the reason for the whole process of discovering your needs.

But there is a risk of over-simplifying your home space and making it a cold space. What this means is you simplified your home and took away its life. Your home's life is embedded in your personality. If your home does not match your personality then it will be like any other house to you. Because you do not connect with it.

The idea of home minimalism is to give you a home you will love. Somewhere you can get your peace. A place where you feel your mind and body connected to and where you can have clear and rational thoughts.

Home minimalism is supposed to help you achieve deep love with your home and this will not happen if your home has no personality.

I know this because when I first changed my home to a minimalist home, I think that I disliked my house even more. It did not reflect who I was. What I thought at that time was that being a home minimalist is only achieved when most of the things are out and the house has a lot of space.

Every time I opened the door of my house, I felt like I was walking through empty space and not my home. I am a person who loves art and beautiful decorations but my house was devoid of them.

My mistake was arranging my home in a similar design as pictures of a minimalist home that I saw online. I found the pictures on a minimalist blog where the blogger was explaining how he decorated his home. He had a huge following and many positive comments of how many people arranged their homes the same way and are now living happily.

There were barely any paintings on the wall and additional beautiful decorations like a flower vase were missing. These items are what excite

me about my space. But I did not include them in my home after redecorating. Simply because my mentor did not have them.

You can imagine my pain when I took out my flower vases and other items from my home. It took me a while to realize that home minimalism needs to be personalized to fit your taste and preferences so you can enjoy it.

No two minimalists are the same just like no two people are the same. Everyone has his/her own tastes and preferences. The only thing that links minimalists is the fact that they have dedicated their lives to living only by what they need. This is something very important to understand.

We live in a time where everyone runs to the internet to get information on something he/she is interested in. So it is expected that you will scroll through over a thousand pictures on Pinterest and read a hundred blogs on what other home minimalists have to say. Then you will go on YouTube to see the minimalist life in action.

While this is something okay to do, and I encourage it 100%, you need to be very careful about how you use this information.

Remember that everyone only writes about their opinion and what worked for them. We are all different and something that worked for one blogger may not work for you. I urge you to just pick the important tips then customize them into your own life. You do not want to end up like me who managed to change my home to a cold and uninviting house.

All the tips you get from anywhere will only be useful if they are personalized to fit your lifestyle. It is okay to have three vases instead of one if you love flowers. But always be cautious not to let the clutter back in. Keep it simple but personalized.

There is always an alternative to everything. What you should do about the information is understand the importance of taking that path. Then go back to your life and see what you have that will help you achieve it.

The man in the blog I was following talked about having statement items in your room that draw the attention of people when they walk into the room. He used painting as his statement items. My flowers can do the job too and give the same perfect results.

Your home should meet your physical and emotional needs at all times. Or you will not be able to connect with it. Being home will not mean anything to you unless you achieve this.

Give your home your personality. Let people feel like they are walking into your world every time they walk into your house.

I have an aunt that loves wearing native clothing and jewelry. She would travel to different parts of the world and buy accessories and clothes made from the natives of that land. We visited her home once when I was nine and right when we passed through the door you could feel that you had walked into her world.

Her decor was mostly made of native art that she had collected from around the world during her travels. Even the arrangement and colors could tell you just how much she was in love with native artifacts.

Thinking back now I can say that back in those years she had already achieved home minimalism because her home was simple but elegant. She had not over decorated with a lot of art that she collected. There was just enough to make the home warm and not congested. Most importantly, she made her home reflect the type of person she was. Her personality was evident in her home.

## YOUR SPACE

It is important to be aware of how you interact with your space. What do you want the space in your home to do for you? How would you like it to represent your likes and interests?

This is important in giving your home your personality because the decor and arrangement will be in line with your needs.

For instance, if you love doing yoga then you definitely need enough room around the house to be able to stretch comfortably. Congesting your house will not be in your best interest because there will be no space to do your stretches.

Look into your routine and most of the items you use on a daily basis. This is very important to make sure all these items are readily at your disposal. And you can access them easily. These items are what will form the main bulk of what is in your space.

Pay attention to how you like your items arranged. For example, do you like the flowers on the right or left side of the room or where do you want to place the TV? I do not like my TV in the living room because I love to read in my living room and it distracts me, so I moved it to another room.

Manipulate your space according to your preference.

Find out what you want each room of the house to do for you. What you want to be doing in each room will help you decorate and arrange it to fit that purpose. As a home minimalist you are looking for your comfort.

Do not worry if you do not arrange your home the same as you saw in the pictures. As long as the arrangement fits your style and interests then you are good to go. You will actually enjoy your home better this way.

## MAKE YOUR OWN RULES

As you work on becoming a home minimalist it is important to follow your own rules. Even if you are outsourcing the services of an interior designer or you are getting your information online it is important to follow your rules. These rules are your preferences.

You are following your rules because you are the one who is aware of your likes and interests and you know how you relate with every room in the house. This means that you have the knowledge of what purpose you want each room to fulfill and you know the right colors, items, and arrangements that will give you that.

Be in charge of the renovation and decoration process. Make sure that you are present when taking out what you do not need in your house to simplify the space. Delegating such tasks to other people will most likely have them doing away with items that are not useful to them but are needed in your life for your comfort.

Hiring help from professionals like interior decorators is good. But be there for the process. Show them what you want and how you want it done. In the end, you are the one that is going to pay for these services and live in your home. So your input is very important or you will end up paying a lot of money for a home you do not like.

Even if these interior decorators are professionals in their line of work it does not mean that your ideas are invalid. If anything, your ideas are what will help them make the house better.

What every interior design specialist should do is decorate your house in a manner that fits your style. You are the expert in this field so they should bring your dreams into reality. They should advise you on the items that will highlight the design you are going for but the final decision of whether to go with it or not is all up to you.



From my experience, I know that every item when strategically placed can fit into any theme and style. This is why your interior decorator is there, to make sure everything is in harmony with each other.

Tell them how to arrange the house, specify where you want the flowers to be placed and how you want the couches arranged. Because this is the only way your personality will come alive in your home.

I have observed from experience that if you leave such decisions in the hands of these people, they will end up giving you a home that matches their personality and not yours. They will sell you a picture-perfect home that looks nice but does not connect to you.

Most times when I am trying something new I always seek the help of an expert in that field. Before I used to take a back seat and let them work their magic. The results were good but I found myself bored with the whole thing after some time because it did not fit my style and taste.

I thought that the reason for this was maybe because I am not interested in the particular activity anymore. But with time I realized that the reason indulging in it did not excite me anymore is because I was not doing it my way. Make the habit of telling these experts what you want first then let them work with that.

## ORGANIZE

Let everything in your home be organized as you want. You may be surprised that even the trash can, when placed wrongly, can cause you a lot of unhappiness. Because its position is not where you want it to be. One wrongly placed item can ruin your organization.

This is why it is important to know how you interact with your space. It will show you where everything needs to go. Your taste is bound to change over time. It is okay to keep moving things around and to arrange them as you want to match your changed taste. As long as the arrangement is not frustrating your whole home minimalist quest.

How your home is organized says a lot about who you are. It shows your personality and that is a good thing. Having an eye for detail and being critical about where everything goes is important. This will also help to keep you disciplined and discourage you from bringing the clutter back in.

## BRING IN LESS

The less items you have, the more intimate you are with them and the more they fit your personality. But remember not to over-simplify your home and take away its personality. Your home should always tell a story of who you are.

When you bring in less you will make sure that what you are bringing in is only what is important to you. Nothing else. This will mean that you are actually taking time to see how the particular item fits into your life and where it can be placed to fully meet its purpose.

Bringing in new things is a good way to invite clutter back into your space. So, you can use the system where you take out something for every time you bring in another thing.

For example, I always take out clothes I have not worn in a long time and have no possibility of wearing again when I purchase new clothes. This makes sure my closet is not congested and the space is enough to accumulate what I am bringing in.

I am also in touch with what is new and what has been there for some time because all items are in use. You will not be able to make your home personal if there is too much going on in it. Simplifying is what is key. And this means that you should not have many things that you do not even use.

## MAKE IT IMPORTANT

Being a home minimalist is already a lifestyle you have chosen. Make the need to have your home fit your personality a priority. This way you will always be in touch with your home. All that is in it will say something about you.

If you make this an important part of your life you will find that clutter is something you will not have to be worried about again. Because you will be looking at connecting personally with all you own.

Do not feel pressured to purchase anything and put it in your home just because someone else thinks you should have it. The idea of minimalism will be lost to you if you succumb to such pressure and do not work on getting the things that you need.

Know your personality and be proud of who you are. Be in touch with yourself and everything around you will tell that story. Have the urge to be unique. And the best way to do this is by being yourself.



## INVEST IN QUALITY ITEMS

*A*lways go for quality. Quality items will always serve their purpose for a very long time. They are not easily susceptible to wear and tear and if maintained well they will have a long life span.

You want your home to have beautiful and quality items that will serve you for a long time. The reason being, your home will always look beautiful with these items in it.

I remember when I was younger, we had really beautiful leather couches in our home. They were mustard yellow in color with beautiful leather patterns. My parents had just redecorated the house and you can imagine the joy of having new and improved furniture. The previous seats we had served us for about ten years according to what my mother told me. I was not born when they purchased them.

After four months of enjoying the seats something terrible happened. The leather started to crack. Shortly after that the seats began to tear terribly. Within two months we had ugly looking rugged seats and no one would have believed that they were the same ones we had purchased less than a year ago.

My dad was very disappointed because he had spent a lot of money on their purchase. He bought the seats from his friend and did not check to assure the quality, because he trusted his friend. Poor dad got a raw deal on synthetic leather seats that did not even last a year.

We actually started missing our old seats. They were old but the quality of the material that made them was good. My parents had to go back to their savings and purchase another couch set because it was even impossible to sit on the rugged leather ones. Let us not even talk about the shame and embarrassment we faced each time we had guests.

When you are changing your home to have a minimalist theme you want to use quality items that will stand the test of time. This way you are

assured of durability and you can use your resources on other ventures like investments. Instead of using your money to replace the poor quality items you purchased.

The good thing with quality items is that they stand out for themselves. You do not have to work hard on accessorizing them or put much effort into maintaining them. Trust me, you will use a lot of your energy and time giving care to low-quality items. They will always wear out easily and are highly prone to tears. You will spend a lot of money fixing and repairing low-quality items.

I have always loved going to vintage car shows whenever they pop around my city just to marvel at the beautiful vintage, but well-maintained, cars. The cars have remained in such wonderful states because they are of high quality.

Materials used to design the car were good and have lasted all through the years. This is an example of just how wonderful buying quality items can be; because these items stand the test of time.

## SAVE ON SPACE

When you invest in quality items you will not need to buy a large number of them so that they can perform a single function that brings comfort to your life. Low-quality items need to be complemented with other items for them to meet their full potential.

A low-quality couch will wear out after a short time and you will have to invest your money in seat covers. And we know that you cannot have only one set of seat covers. Your seats cannot be left bare when you remove the covers to go and wash them. The other seat covers that are not in use at the moment need to be stored somewhere in your closet making it congested for your clothes. Or maybe there is no room in your closet and you will have to use a box or bag to store them.

If you buy a low-quality cooker that does not have a good oven you will still have to purchase an oven. Because the one the cooker comes with will break down after a few uses. You have a whole cooker set with a defective oven taking up space and you still need to find room to accommodate the other oven you had to buy.

Just think of how much space you will be saving in your kitchen and closet if you invested in high-quality seats and a cooker. You will have just one cooker to serve your cooking and baking needs. And your seats will not need covers because they are not wearing out.

Low-quality commodities are not durable. Imagine having to buy extra bulbs because the brand you use does not last long. Within a month of use the bulb burns out and needs to be replaced. This is a waste of time. Sometimes the bulb will not even last a full month. You'll think to yourself, "did I not just fix that bulb?"

Now let us talk about where you are going to store the extra bulbs. Buy bulbs that will last you a long time. With the new worldly technology



changes, I am sure that such bulbs are available. My bulbs last me close to a year and I feel content that I have gotten my money's worth.

You will only need to store bulbs for one replacement in a year not bulbs for two replacements each month. Anyway, who wants to keep climbing up to the bulb holders to keep replacing them.

I personally do not like that job. I have a fear of heights and dealing with anything to do with electricity. So, I would rather invest in the best quality bulbs to minimize the number of times I have to change them.

## TIME

Quality goods will last you a long time. High-quality batteries will last you a long time and save you money on replacing them all the time.

This is not a gamble or taking chances. As long as it is of high quality, it will always last long, even longer than you needed it for. High-quality items will also not break down when not used for a long time or when they are not used for a while. They remain intact.

Imagine having to change your blender every year because the ones you have been purchasing have poor fuses that always blow up after a short while? How long will you live in this misery? You are a minimalist now meaning your comfort is what comes first. You cannot afford to keep living like this.

Shop around different stores and look at the products that they deal in. Find reviews online on what people that have purchased the products think about them. Then make an informed and wise decision.

Take your time. The time you take doing your research will pay off 100%. You will feel confident in what you are purchasing because you know that it will last you a long time.

If you decorate your home with high-quality items you do not have to schedule close redecorating sessions. Because what you currently have are items you love and are very durable. You will save the time and money spent on redecorating or replacing broken items every other time.

## PURPOSE FULFILLING ITEMS

All high-quality items will always perform their intended purpose. Sometimes they will even offer extra services that you had not bought them for. A really good blender can become a nice juicer, food crusher, and smoothie maker. You can use it to perform so many functions you may not need a food processor or bullet.

With low-quality items, they will either break down or wear out before they perform their intended work. Imagine a blender that breaks down on you two months after buying it and you wanted it to last you at least one year.

Your beautiful couch set will last you a very long time and your reason for changing to other seats will be to get new designs, not because they are too worn out to give you comfort.

A quality item will always exceed your expectations. And you will love your minimalist life for making you make this wise and informed decision of purchasing it.

## SAVES MONEY

I have never met anyone that does not jump at an opportunity to save money. Do not whine when you see the price of a quality item. Actually, be happy and set your mind towards purchasing it because it is an investment that will save you your money.

A quality couch set can last you up to ten years if well maintained. Your kitchen appliances will even surpass the time of their warranty and last for a very long time while performing their intended purpose.

Do not feel like when something lasts for long it will go out of style after some time. Thinking like this will have you chasing trends and wasting your money on them. As long as you maintain them they will stay in good condition and still look beautiful.

The vintage cars I go to see at the show each year are still in perfect condition because they have been well-maintained through the years.

If you are a minimalist that focuses on quality you will be able to save a lot of money because you will not be wasting your money repairing and replacing things all the time.

Take this for example, if a low-quality bulb costs \$0.45 while a high-quality one costs \$5. You need one to two low-quality bulbs a month. Keep in mind these low-quality bulbs are not energy saving so your electricity bill will also be higher. But you need only one high-quality bulb a year. And it saves on your electricity consumption as well.

If you do the math, you will see that you spend \$10.80 on low-quality bulbs a year. I have not included the extra fee on your electric bill here. But a high-quality bulb will only cost you \$5 a whole year and you will save \$5.80.

There is no shame in not affording a high-quality item at a particular time. Just do not settle for low quality. It is better to save and raise the

money needed to purchase a higher quality item. I promise you that your wait will be justified. Imagine using the little you have on a low-quality item that will not even last you six months.

You will not be saving any money by opting for cheap items if they are of low-quality. Because you will have to keep replacing the item or paying for repair.

As a home minimalist you are looking for durability. There is also a way you have decorated your home and all items fit the decor. Having to constantly replace items will kill the theme and the house will look disorganized not because you have not arranged it well but because many items do not match.

Minimalists always want to save their money. You have earned the money from your hard work. Do not undermine it on items that will not give you your money's worth. If you respect money it will respect you too. And it is only by using your money wisely that you will respect it.

## KNOW YOUR BRAND

You need to know the brands that deal in high-quality items. This is the best way to make sure you are not being conned into purchasing low-quality items. It is also tiring to keep researching every day when you want to purchase something. And moving from brand to brand is risky.

Yes, do your research the first time. Look into different companies and become acquainted with all they deal in. See what they use to make their products. Make sure that their products are environmentally friendly and will not be a health hazard when put in your home.

Compare product descriptions from different companies. See what each item has to offer. This will help you make an informed decision because you will know what item contains what you need to perform the function you intend it to.

After that, look at their reviews and client testimonials. What do people that have used their products have to say? A company with a number of negative reviews is waving a red flag. It is better to avoid such companies rather than risking it and becoming another one of their customers that will complain about their items.

See how they respond to clients that say their purchase had a defect. Look into their return policies and see what happens when someone needs their item fixed. Do they have a delivery system? And when they deliver is there someone to help you assemble the items? For example, does their delivery team have a technician that will help you set up your new washer?

These may look like unnecessary information but it is very important. It will save you from purchasing low-quality items and save you time and money from repairing or replacing the item.

Be wary of companies with a “no return” policy. This screams that they do not want to take liability for their defective items. You need to know

how to protect your money and that is by having items that meet high-quality standards. A company that takes pride in quality will always be open to returns because they are genuinely concerned about their customers.

When you like the items from one company make it a habit to purchase your items from them. Each time you want to purchase something that they have, go with their products. I believe that products from the same company work better together because they have been made to complement each other. It is also good to go with your theme because items from different companies will not have the same look or color shade.

For instance, if you are going with a black theme for your kitchen you want your appliances to be black too. But the black shade in one company may not be the same in another company. So, all your items will have different shades of black that is going to make the whole theme look bad.

Become a home minimalist with an eye for good quality and I assure you that you will enjoy your home even more. Nobody wants to live in a home where everything keeps breaking down at any minute. You want to be able to enjoy the durability and not have fear that something could give out at any minute.





## LIVE WITH ONLY THE ESSENTIALS

The minimalist lifestyle is all about living with the essentials. As a home minimalist you should find a way to minimize the items in your home down to only your essentials. These are your most important items that are needed to perform the functions of a room.

This process will require patience and due diligence from you. Remember that home minimalism is not a death sentence of living with the bare minimum. But it is a way of simplifying your life to make sure your needs are met.

You need to go room by room and ask yourself what is essential and what is not. Your essentials are your needs. And you want to make sure the items in each room are what is needed for the room to have its essence and to serve its purpose.

Imagine a kitchen without a cooker, or a bathroom without soap. Do not get to these negative extremes where you are taking out the important and leaving the unimportant.

I want to put a disclaimer here. By keeping your essentials, I do not intend for you to live with the bare minimum. Do keep everything that is needed in your life for you to live comfortably. I am just interested in getting rid of the unimportant stuff that is sitting on your precious space and gathering dust.

When you live like this you will actually do away with a lot of the stress in your life. A lot of times in life we feel like the causes of our stress are out there in the world. Well sometimes, whatever we surround ourselves with is what contributes to our stress.

I remember when my house was congested I was a very stressed person. My mind had an automatic way of complicating even the simplest of things. And you know why? Because I surrounded myself with congestion. I had a

lot of items that I bought and convinced myself that I would use but never even took it out of the box.

My life then was defined by what I had. And as per the traditional way of thinking that having more means you are living right, I was always looking to get more. I did not know that my constant unnecessary purchases were what was affecting my mental health negatively.

I had a pancake maker, a very beautiful looking machine that mixes the pancake dough and has a dispenser that allowed easy pouring of the dough to the pan. And I thought this was very cool. But imagine that I never actually took it out of the box. I think I even forgot about it.

Every time I made pancakes I still hand-mixed my dough and used a spoon to pour my dough portions onto the pan. You can now see that this appliance was not essential to me. Without it, my life would still go on smoothly.

You need to ask yourself questions about each item you own. Ask yourself how important it is to you and whether it is an essential. Have no fear of letting go of items that you discover are not essentials.

Learn not to be a hoarder. A hoarder is someone that keeps all of their possessions with them even if they no longer use them. Their reason for this is that the items belong to them so they should keep them.

Other extreme hoarders attach a sentimental feeling to an item to give their reasons for not letting go of it. Those items will help out other people who actually need them and will put them into better use. Let go of them and create room for better things in your life.

You have to know the purpose of each room in your home. This way, it will be easier to know if the items are essential to it or not. It is only when you take out the non-essentials that you will see the room in your house and know what you can do with it. Your re-modeling process will be made easier because there is room to create.

From here on out, everything that is in your space has to be an essential.  
Or it should stay out.

## ANALYZE YOUR SPACE

You should look at the space of your house. Some houses are smaller than others, so they will need fewer items in it to retain enough space. Other houses are big and having a few things in it will make the house look empty. You need to understand your space and know what is going to keep it minimal.

This process is easier when you go room by room and judge each room according to its function. You will figure out what is essential to the room and also ways you would like to change it.

These changes may turn essentials into non-essentials. Like if you decide to change the theme of your home when turning it into a minimalist home there are some things that you may not need anymore. Maybe their color or purpose will not fit in with your new theme. It is okay to let them go.

When you are doing this room by room process, have a list. Write down all your essentials and what you do not need. The process of getting rid of non-essentials can be a tedious one, and it is possible for you to forget about most of the things you were going to get rid of.

## CAUTION WITH NEW ITEMS

It is easy to bring back non-essentials into your home through the things you are buying. Now that your home has a lot of space you will feel like adding a few items into your space thinking that they will not harm your space.

But you will be shocked how these items will gradually multiply and you will be back where you started before you notice it. Bringing in these non-essential items will start slowly and with time you will build a habit of it. And the congestion you worked hard to eliminate will be seeping back in.

Restrict your purchase to essentials only. Go shopping with a list of what you are going to buy and do not waiver or deviate from the list. Teach yourself the discipline of sticking to your list and only picking the things that are on it. Do not be cheeky by adding non-essentials to your list so your buying them is justified. Stay away from non-essentials. It is for your own good.

I used to play this trick a few years ago. My list always included a few things I knew I did not need, but by virtue of them being on the list, they became needed.

You need to be your own accountability checker. Stop cheating yourself by doing this. I had to make the decision to stay clean and stop doing this because I wanted to become better. And there is no way I would if I kept relapsing.

Your results will only be as significant as the effort you put in. The more you keep cheating on your journey, the more your progress delays.

Always ask yourself questions on how essential an item is before you purchase it. Give yourself time to reflect on its usefulness and see if it is a priority in your life or you can do without it.

I know how addictive shopping is. And these days it is not limited only to physical shopping at a store but also to online shopping. I feel like online shopping is a good idea but they should have a support group for people that struggle with impulse buying items they see on online stores. Or maybe there is one. I need to find out.

Before I changed my life and deleted all shopping apps on my phone, I would find myself wasting hours scrolling through different online stores. My eyes remain fixated to the screen and my fingers keep scrolling. At this moment I can even forget to go make myself food or even go to the bathroom. It was like I had been possessed and completely hypnotized by what I was looking at.

You know with online shopping you will always find a link that takes you to another store that has more products and it will open you up to another world of online shopping. If you are not careful you will find yourself being fascinated by these things that are not needs because of the convenience of acquiring them.

I feel like going to a store personally has kept me disciplined and helped me not deviate from my focus on essentials. Because when I walk into a store I go straight to what I am purchasing and check it out. I do not allow myself to wonder and walk around looking at the other items.

Do not fall for marketing traps. No matter how good the product is, if you do not need it then you do not need it. There is no maybe attached to it. And it will make more sense to you when you purchase it when it is a need.

## INVEST IN QUALITY

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to invest in quality. Make your essentials quality items. When you go with quality you will be saved from the hustle of buying other items to accessorize the items you already have.

Quality items also have the ability to perform more than one function and will make you tone down on things like appliances. You can have a cooker with an oven and a hot plate. So you can put your coffee pot on the hot plate, bake some bread or roast meat in the oven and still cook food on the burners.

These items will last longer and you will not need to keep replacing them and filling your space with items that do not work.

## BE CONTENTED

After filtering out your stuff and remaining with what is essential please be content with them. Do not let the extra space make you feel like you have a little. You have what is essential to you and that is enough. And you have peace of mind and your space is not congested. This is bigger than any other thing.

Do not fill in the space left by these items with non-essential things again. Find a way to put the space into good use. And the space should remain as space unless something essential is sitting on it.

When you are content, you will only pick the essentials when you go shopping. You will not have the urge to purchase something just because it looks nice.

Contentment will make the minimalist life become acceptable to you because you will appreciate what you have. Appreciation is a good way of staying loyal to your home minimalist lifestyle. You will be thrilled by the new look and feel of your home and you will not want to bring in more and congest it.

Appreciation will teach you how to fall in love with what you have and not constantly dwell on what you do not have. So you will not be taking unnecessary steps of filling the space but you will be enjoying the new look your home has.

But even as you are being content please do not settle for less when you need more. As always, your comfort should be your main concern. And you should always make sure your needs are met. Do not oversimplify and try to be content with it. Just tone down on the unnecessary and keep the necessary.



## BORROW

Some of these non-essential items are things you need once in a year like a grill or a tent and sleeping bag. It is okay to borrow these items from friends and family or to rent them. This way you will get what you need for that time then take it back to the owner when you are done using it.

There is no shame in borrowing or renting. This is a good way to make sure you are getting these things when they are needed by you and also making sure they do not sit in your space gathering dust. Your storage could be too small to fit all of these items.

Some of these items may wear out when stored for too long. The grill could rust and become defective so it will not be able to roast the food. It will be better when these things are borrowed then returned to make sure other people can maximize their use.

Keep borrowed and rented items in good shape. Be careful when using them and aim at returning them better than you found them, especially when they are borrowed from family and friends.

These items are in use by them so they will want them back in a good state. When you rent, the owner will retain your deposit on the item and you will lose your money if you return their goods in worse condition than it was when they gave it to you.

## APPEALING SPACE

Now that all non-essentials are out it is time to do something creative and useful with the space. Empty space will make the house look drab and feel boring.

You can decide to have plants or a flower vase with pretty flowers at the corners of your room. Do not leave the space unattended to. Your house will not have the home minimalist feel. It will not be personal to your needs but it will be an empty space with a couch, bed, and cooker.

Hang nice paintings on the wall or have an antique set. Use items that will fit your theme and style and remember to keep the minimalist feel. This means that you will not use this opportunity to do something new with your space to bring back the clutter. Too many plants and flowers will defeat the purpose of the home minimalist cause.

Seek expert advice if you do not know what to do with the space. Go online and find ideas. Then make sure to personalize these ideas to fit your style and taste before incorporating them in your home.

This should be something fun to do. I know I looked forward to playing with my new space once I got rid of my non-essentials. There were so many things I wanted to do from before and now I had the opportunity. I am sure you will enjoy this too.



## DECLUTTER YOUR HOME

Now that you have understood that the minimalist home is mainly about surrounding yourself with the essentials, the need to declutter becomes obvious. Before you even start this process you have to define what clutter is.

This will help you pinpoint what is clutter in your space and you can find a way of dealing with it. Unless you know the meaning of clutter you risk getting rid of even the important items you own as a way of remaining with a few items.

The process of decluttering requires patience. There is no need to go “cold turkey” on this, especially if it is your first time doing it. The essence of your decluttering will be lost to you and you will not fully understand the need to declutter. And the faster you get things out the faster you bring them all back in. Having a lot of empty space in your house, all of a sudden is dangerous.

Remember that the state of your mind is the same as what surrounds you. So, if there is sudden empty space, your mind will have a sudden void in it. Mostly because you were not fully prepared for the sudden change and your mind had not come around to the idea.

Your mind and body will have a yearning to fill the empty space because it is not used to this void. This is how you will go out and bring back with you non-essentials into your space. Within no time your home is going to be filled with even more clutter than before.

Decluttering is more of an emotional process than a physical one. As humans, we have some emotional attachment to everything we own. Especially things that we spent money to purchase. Or items that we were gifted. I know that I always think of the time and effort someone put in to give me a gift so, I become attached to the item.

Decluttering is like losing a part of you because of the time and money that was spent to purchase something.

Before you start decluttering make sure you are in the right mental space to do so. Tell yourself that this is what is best for you.

Have a conversation with yourself where you explain in-depth how the clutter around you has negatively impacted your life. Make peace with this and once your mind is set begin decluttering.

Clutter is everything that is not essential. These are the items that are just in your space that bring no meaning to your life apart from the fact that you own them. Clutter is like having a car and not using it and letting it gather dust and rust in the garage. Unless you put that car to use you will not enjoy its benefits.

If there is anything in your home that you do not use and do not enjoy its benefits it is because you do not need it and your life will still be comfortable without it around.

## DECLUTTER BECAUSE:

You need to declutter because you need to get rid of all the non-essentials. All these things are causing you unnecessary stress because they have to be maintained and cared for. There is no reason why you need to be caring for items that you do not use. In your life you should only invest your time and other resources on items that you use and can prove that you enjoy their benefits.

Otherwise, you are wasting precious time and money that can be used on other things. It is the same as cleaning a car that you have never taken out of the garage. The car is not serving your needs and you are not enjoying its benefits so there is no obligation for you to take care of it.

Declutter so you can be left caring for only what is essential.

Once you declutter, you will spend less time organizing your space. Cleaning and organizing my home was a task I did not like to do in my house. This was ironic for me because everyone who knows me knows that I love a clean and organized space. But because my home was full of so many things I became mentally and physically tired each time I had to clean. It was too much work for me to accomplish.

In fact, I would get mentally tired before I even began the physical process. And because of this, I developed a negative attitude towards cleaning. I stopped looking forward to having a clean space and would only clean the visible areas. The rest of the clamped-up space would be left out for the next time that I kept promising myself. The “next time” never really happened because I always ended up procrastinating.

These places gathered a lot of dust. This dust affected my health and I was getting sick all the time. For almost six years of my life, I was constantly on antihistamines to control the sneezing and allergies I got from

the dust. And the doctor would always tell me of a new treatment but it never worked for me because I was going back to the problem area.

Organizing my space was also a headache. I tried arranging the items in all styles to make sure I was saving as much space as possible but it was not working. This frustrated me even more and at this time I was oblivious to the decluttering solution. I was so attached to what I had that giving it up was not an option I considered.

But after changing to a minimalist lifestyle and seeing all the beautiful pictures of minimalist homes I decided that this was something I needed to do for myself. This was the way to enjoy my home and my space.

If you feel that your home is cramped because it is small, trust me that even if you move to a bigger house you will still clutter it. Because you have not realized that the clutter is what is filling your home, when you move to a bigger house you will still go out and buy more stuff and crowd your house again.

You need to learn how to manage the little space that you have so you have discipline when you move to bigger spaces.

Clutter is an easy way of falling into debt. You are constantly purchasing things you do not need for whatever reason you are giving yourself. And if your income cannot sustain all these purchases then you are either maxing out your credit cards or taking loans. And in the process undermining your financial freedom because you will be stuck paying back money that you used wrongly.

But when you avoid clutter and stick to purchasing only the essentials you will save yourself a lot of money. You will never buy anything that you do not need. And the money saved can be used in other positive ventures.

## GO THROUGH EACH ROOM

It is very important to treat each room independently when you are decluttering. Go into a room and ask yourself what the room needs. Then look for all the other non-essentials in it.

What I do is I usually have a book and a pen. I write down everything in the room first. Then I sit down and ask myself whether each item is an essential. This is where I make a three-column list where each column lays out the essential, non-essential, and items I am not sure about. Then I update my spreadsheet on my laptop to make sure my inventory stays updated.

By going through each room I mean that you should look into everything in the room. Open the cupboards and closets, pull out the boxes and check out what is inside. Just make sure that you know what is inside each room. You need to be fully informed so you can make wise decisions.



## START WITH THE EASY

When decluttering it is better to start by decluttering the easy things. These are things like old letters and receipts that you do not need anymore, books that you have read and will not read again, old pots and pans that you do not need because you have new ones and other easy items. These are items you can let go of without batting an eyelid.

It will be easier for you to declutter these items and it will raise your confidence in the decluttering process. When you see yourself getting rid of these things easily you will have the confidence that you are ready to get rid of the bigger things that you know you do not need but you have an attachment to them.

And when you start with the easy you will enjoy the process and become more open-minded to the process of decluttering. You will feel lighter when you do away with those items and the feeling will keep you going until the whole house is covered.

## ONE IN, ONE OUT

For every new thing you bring into your home something old has to go. This is a very good way to make sure clutter is not accumulating again.

I will use a simple example to illustrate this. If you bring in a new plant, an old plant has to leave your home. If you allow the old to mix with the new then you will not know how the clutter crept back in and end up ruining your beautiful space.

This rule applies mostly when you are bringing in something that you already have in your home. If you buy new seats the old set should go. Each time I redecorate my home and get new appliances and other items I always donate or sell the old ones I had. This way I have space for the new and it becomes even more enjoyable to use them.

It becomes hard to enjoy new things when you bring them into a congested environment. You have to squeeze it through many things to store it and you have to move a lot around when you want to use it.

Free yourself from this captivity and declutter so you can enjoy everything in your home. You deserve to enjoy it. Now give yourself the space to do it.

## HAVE A DECLUTTERING SYSTEM

There are many ways you can declutter. You can choose a system that is easy for you. One that will help you get rid of all the clutter and not hoard things that you know you do not need.

One system you can adopt is spending some time every day to declutter. This can be from five minutes to a few hours every day. For beginners, you can start by spending five minutes decluttering a day. This method is easier when you have gone through your whole home and identified what you need to remove.

Another method is by giving out an item a day. This is from the pile of your non-essential items. Or you could sell the items. Through this, you are reducing items in your home one at a time and before you know it your home will be free of clutter.

Play the decluttering game created by Joshua Fields and Ryan Nicodemus. In this game you declutter as many items as the day of the month. So, if it is the 30th you have to declutter thirty items. This game is best played when you start at the beginning of the month.

It will help you build momentum and boost your decluttering confidence. Start with one item on the 1st then two and before you know it you will be decluttering twenty-five items on the twenty-fifth day of the month.

Do not skip any days because you will have a backlog of items you did not declutter. The process will only benefit it if you stick to playing the daily game.

You can ask for help if this decluttering process is too much for you. Do not shy away from asking for a little help. Everyone needs help at a particular time in their life. Asking for help means you are dedicated to

getting better. So ask for it at any time. Find a friend, relative, or professional that is well conversant with this process and work with them.

They will give you advice on what you should do and will walk the journey with you to keep you accountable. I have helped a few families and friends declutter their homes. Sometimes the process gets so emotional and because I went through it too, I can be there for them and constantly remind them why they need to do this.

Please pick a home minimalist to help you with this. People that are not minimalists may not understand the importance of this process and will not be able to guide you in the right way.

## STORAGE

Some items cannot be sold or donated. These items may not be essential now but they will be useful in the future or items with sentimental importance to you. It is okay to store them, just not in the space in your home. Find storage. This can be a storeroom, box or a cabinet in the house.

Before you move these items to storage make sure you declutter your storage areas first. There are some items there that you can get rid of now because they are no longer important to you. Create new space in the storage areas so you can have enough space to store the other items.

Make sure to arrange them well so they remain in perfect condition for the next time you will need to use them.

## ORGANIZE

Designate a specific space for each item. This is my favorite thing to do because I hate having to look for things. My children constantly get in trouble with me every time they move things in my house without my consent. I hate the inconvenience of having to search for an item that could be anywhere in the house.

But I also find that when I designate space for each item, I do not fill the space with other things. When I come across an extra space, I get an immediate reminder that something already goes there. The item could be in use somewhere else but it will be placed back. It has helped me to keep the clutter away because in my mind my home is already filled with what should be in it.

## DO IT REPEATEDLY

Repeat the decluttering process from time to time. Clutter will always find its way into your home. Or maybe something that was an essential six months ago has become a non-essential.

Start again with each room and find a way to get rid of these items. Constantly doing this will make sure the home minimalist space you created is maintained.

## SELL, DONATE, GIFT

If you are worried about what to do with the items you have decluttered know that you have a lot of options available to you. These items can be re-sold. This way you will gain money that can be invested in the re-decoration and re-modeling of your home. Sell the items one by one or have a garage sale.

The items can be donated to people in your community that need them. Children homes and other shelters will make good use of your clothes and other appliances that you do not need anymore. The joy of giving will befall you and you will feel really happy for doing this. An item may not mean anything to you but it is everything to someone else.

You could also gift these items to friends and family. Each time I read a book I gift it to a friend or family member who will benefit from it the same way I did. I am spreading information and at the same time protecting my space. Appliances that I do not use will serve as good gifts to someone in my social group that needs them.





## STUDY YOUR HOME SPACE

Space is an important factor in home minimalism because we want to create more of it in your home and make it meaningful. I am here to teach you how you can create space and how you can make it useful.

You have learned about sticking to your essentials and decluttering from previous chapters but this process will be unfruitful if you do not know what you are looking for in your space.

I am sure you have seen the beautiful pictures of homes with minimal furniture, nice decor, and lots of space like in the picture above.

But it will be useless if you do not know what the space is for. If it is just empty space to you then be assured you will subconsciously find ways to fill the space.

But if it is a meaningful space that gives you freedom then your mind will not perceive it like a void and you will not fill the urge to fill up the space.

The reason for the space is to decongest your home and in turn decongest your life. Space in home minimalism is about taking out the complicated and remaining sane. I hate congestion so much because I feel like it hinders me from doing too much for myself. And it makes me claustrophobic.

When my home was congested I even went down to cooking “quick-fix” meals or ordering take-out because I did not want to be in my kitchen. It was full of so many dishes, appliances, and pots. All of which I thought were a good idea to buy but they made my kitchen so congested that moving around to make a meal became a nightmare. I became a prisoner of my own possessions because the congestion they caused did not allow me to enjoy them.

The sun did not reflect its light fully through my windows because there were so many items creating shadows. Honestly, I did not know what people were talking about when they say that they love how the sun fills their rooms in the morning. I thought they were exaggerating and trying to make some poetic conversation.

Even when I saw pictures showing light sipping through into rooms, I just thought they used artificial lighting. Poor me was missing out on the joy of the world. How sad that version of me was and he was oblivious to it.

Ask yourself this question, “is my space to be filled or is it to be enjoyed?” Did you study your space when you moved into your house? Was it a small space or a big space? Did you make plans for what you would do with it and how you would decorate it?

Bare and empty spaces will make your home uninviting and you will not like it. And this is what causes people to go out and try to fill in the space. To avoid this uninviting feeling that they get from their bare space. This though doesn't need to be the case because you can make your space warm and inviting without necessarily filling it out.

In life we have been accustomed to think that having big space means that you can fill more into it. While this can be true because some spaces are too small to occupy your needs, the home minimalist lifestyle is there to help you appreciate your space. It will make you appreciate not being congested and suffocated by so many things so you can enjoy your life.

Look at this instance, we believe that a big plate means serving more food. And that is true because it can hold on more food than a small plate can. But having a big plate does not mean you are obligated to have big portion servings of food.

Nutritionists have tried to take out this idea from our heads. They have tried to convince us that a bigger plate does not necessarily mean you should have more quantities of food than you can normally eat in it.

This beats logic because you will most likely end up having plenty of leftovers on your plate leading to waste. You may also end up developing health complications attributed to not watching what you eat because of your sudden fixation on finishing the large quantity of food on your plate

When I was growing up the smaller plates were for the children and the bigger ones for adults. The more you grow the bigger the plate so you can fill more food. Because older people ate more.

I think this is how we got the idea of congesting our houses. Nutritionists today actually tell people who are dieting to use smaller plates if they want to achieve smaller food portions.

How ironic is it that everyone in the world is failing to understand that space can be used for your comfort? You can still have smaller portions in a big plate to avoid your plate being too full and you spilling the food each time you try to scoop a bite or having plenty of leftovers.

Now with our homes, we do not understand how the extra, free space is for our comfort but we see it as more room for more things. Please do away with this way of thinking.

Decongest your house to give yourself space that you will enjoy. Space that all your items can sit in comfortably and not have to be squished in between many other things. The space will give you intimacy with all you own and your items will all be within your reach. Space that will help you not get suffocated in your own surroundings.

## WHY AM I A MINIMALIST?

Ask yourself this question every day. You cannot be a home minimalist if your lifestyle is not a minimalist one. Minimalism is what will help you appreciate living with less in your minimalist home. Or else you will ruin your beautiful space within a few months of getting it.

It is good to write down what you want minimalism to do for you and more so home minimalism. Write it somewhere you will always go back and refer. Remind yourself every time why you started this journey and what you hope to achieve from it. Write down your achievements that have been made possible by your minimalist lifestyle and what you have learned about yourself and life from the journey.

Then write down the benefits of having space in your home. Reflect on this as often as you need to so you do not end up congesting your space again. Sometimes I reflect back to how disorganized my life was before minimalism and I cringe at the thought of going back to live like that.

The space has helped me become a clean and organized person. It has positively affected my mental state and I am no longer confused when I think or work on something. I am now making killer meals in my kitchen because I have enough prepping space and I can move around as I please.

This is how I understood that indeed less is more. I do not need all that stuff in my space to justify myself. The space gave me back my life because it allowed me to have a sane mind. I can even do yoga in my home now and can stretch however far I want. Remember I hate looking for stuff, now with my space, I can be organized and reaching things is no longer a task.

My whole family also enjoys the space. Even my son said once that the space in the house allows him to be himself. By that, he means that he can do summersaults as he pleases and he constantly breaks my flower vases and plant pots.

## CLEAR YOUR SPACE

Let this be something you consciously do all the time. Make a habit of clearing the dishes after every meal and folding the clothes after doing laundry. Do not allow your mind to take in the disorganization and improper use of space. This means you will be back at filling it again with non-essentials because your mental state is filled with the mess that surrounds you.

Make a habit of being organized. That every time you take something out of its situated place you will make sure to put it back.

Repeat your decluttering process from time to time. Give yourself the opportunity to get rid of all these unnecessary things that are causing congestion in your space. Actively and consciously do this. Do not just sit and say that you will do it later.

Procrastinating the decluttering process means you are not giving it the seriousness it deserves. Even when you declutter you will not treat it with the seriousness it needs and most non-essentials will be retained.

If you constantly work towards maintaining your space you will not need to be worried about congestion. Doing it constantly will help you understand the importance and will make you appreciate living within your means. Because you will not be spending a lot of money buying things you do not need in your life.

Home minimalism is going to make you aware of how much you did not need and you will see just how much space you have left. You can even decide to move into a smaller house that will still fit your needs because now you do not have so much to accommodate.

## IDENTIFY YOUR WEAKNESS

If you have a weakness in purchasing things even when you do not need them, you need to identify it. Your weakness could also be wanting to fill every space in your life. And most times you end up filling it with unnecessary items that do not help you.

Or maybe you have an underlying problem and your impulse buying is a way of escaping the problem. I know mine was an inferiority complex. My life goal was to buy all the expensive things so my friends could see me as an equal that could afford all these things. This did not happen and all I managed to do was sink myself into debt to please people that did not need to be in my life in the first place.

I felt embarrassed every time these friends came into my home and asked for something I did not have or talked about an item they had that was better than mine.

Minimalism helped me realize this problem and I learned that there is no one in this world I am obligated to please other than myself. This lifestyle helped me get rid of such toxic friends and move from the toxic relationships. It helped me love myself and become content with who I am.

I realized that I did not need material possessions to validate me, if someone could not love and appreciate me for who I am then they did not deserve me and my awesomeness at all. Yes, I call myself awesome because that is who I am. And you are too, you just have to believe it.

Identify what makes you buy stuff you do not need and work on it. You can talk to someone that will help you through it. Never be ashamed of seeking help. You will be surprised by how many people out there are willing to help you achieve the free life you so desire. All you need to do is acknowledge your problem and reach out.

As you identify this problem also be consciously aware of the benefits space will give you. Read people's testimonials online and see how the space created by home minimalism helped them get their life back. You will see that your problem is not a unique one and that many people in the world have faced it too. Be encouraged by the fact that they were able to get past it. And so will you.



## WORK TOWARDS ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

Your goal is to achieve home minimalism so work towards it. Be there for the process. Make yourself available to learn from this as much as you can. I promise you that it is going to be worth it.

Do not just want to be a home minimalist because you saw the cute designs online and pay interior decorators to do it for you. Home minimalism starts from within. If you pay people to take care of the whole process for you then you will not understand its importance.

Minimalism as a lifestyle is there to help you appreciate living within your own means by purchasing only what you need to live comfortably. Home minimalism is there to ensure this is achieved in your home and space. Your home is where you spend your alone time and it is a place you are allowed to be free and most vulnerable. This makes it an important place in your life.

By reducing on all non-essentials, you will be able to appreciate and know your needs. This is why home minimalism cannot be bought. Because if you do not understand what you need in life be sure that you will fill up that new home you paid a lot of money for with a lot of unnecessary junk.

Plus other people do not know what you need in your life to live comfortably. If you do not work with your designer just be sure that they will give you what they think you want. This in most cases will not be what you need.

You have to be extremely careful because you will pay to live in a house that has not been customized to your needs. And each time you walk through the front door you will not have the feeling of being at home. You will just say you are home but you will not feel it.

## PROTECT THE SPACE

Now that you have fully discovered the need to protect your space you can use different methods to protect the space and to make it meaningful.

You can start by always decluttering your space from time to time and remove everything that is now a non-essential. Understand that you want to maintain your space so always make sure you work on it.

Pick a theme that will make the space meaningful. It could be an art theme, flower theme, or an antique theme. Just something that will make the space not look and feel bare and empty. Have a beautiful wallpaper, painting, or plant in your space that will bring back its life. But make sure whatever you put in the space is not cluttering it and it must be something you like.

Have a focal point in your home. This is achieved by having something in the space of a room that will draw people to it. Something like a beautiful antique set that will make the space interesting and not dull. Make it something that will want people to be in that space so they will not risk cluttering it and as a result ruining it.

Balance out your space. The less is more principle should apply here but also be careful about oversimplifying your space. Make sure your needs are met by the items in it. And that the items are enough, not so much and not too little but enough. Let the items in each room serve the purpose of the room.

Stick to this process and I assure you that you will fully enjoy the benefits of being a home minimalist. Like in diets, do not have cheat days where you purchase a non-essential and promise to put it to use.

Remember that the space in your home has been accounted for and this new item will be sitting on another item's space. And slowly you will keep

purchasing more non-essentials and, in the end, you will end up with a congested and clustered home again.

Be excited that you are a minimalist because you are giving yourself the opportunity to live a free and non-congested life. Do not feel like the process is bulky but look at all you will achieve in the end. Like in a diet where you have to eat healthy so your mind and body can also be healthy. You do away with all unhealthy foods and dedicate yourself to only taking in what is benefiting your body.



## POWER OF SIMPLE DECORATIONS IN YOUR SPACE

*K*eeping it simple is the whole idea behind minimalism. Your home should have a warm and inviting nature to it by using just a few necessary things to achieve this.

The principle of less is more applies here largely. As a home minimalist, you have to master the art of decorating your home with minimal details and still bring out a beautiful and elegant look.

By using minimal detail I do not mean that you should barely do anything. You should decorate your home and give it a personal and attractive look. But everything you do has to be kept simple.

The reason for this is to avoid cluttering your space in the name of decorating it and also to appreciate every detail in another room. It is easy to miss some room details because there is too much going on and your mind cannot take it all in.

## MINIMALIST STYLE

As a minimalist that is creating a minimalist home you want to decorate your home with just what it needs. This is the same as living by only what you need to stay comfortably as a minimalist.

Take your home as your child. You are feeding your child with enough food that is rich in all the necessary nutrients and minerals. And you are doing it to make sure your baby is healthy and strong.

Your home needs the same. It needs to be loved and given just the right art and decoration to make it beautiful. Always remember that too much of something is poisonous. The more items in the name of decorations and furniture you have in your home, the more cluttered and congested it will be. And in the end the beauty you were looking to achieve will be lost.

Reduce the art and decor in your home to only what is necessary. Do not have too much going on in a room. This means that you should have only one or two focal points in a room. The focal points are the room's main attraction. They are what draw people to a room. It could be a painting or antique set.

Too much of them will bring a feeling of so much happening at the same time. The room will not be relaxing as it is over-cluttered with art and other details that the mind is trying to understand.

Our minds will always work to try and break down whatever is in our vision. So when you are in a room full of too much your mind will keep moving around trying to figure it out. And you will become exhausted because your mind is not at rest.

The doctor in a minimalist home is geared towards achieving enough space with minimal furniture and detail. So you end up with a fine looking spacious room with just enough furniture. The reason for the minimal furniture and detail is to draw attention to the color, texture, and shape of

the room. The art will be more appreciated if there is not too much to concentrate on.

Keeping your art simple will help you enjoy a decongested and uncluttered space with good organization. Your space and art will be appreciated.

Everything you place in your home is a work of art. So everything should be kept simple.

## DECORATE WITH LESS

Because less is more go with few decorations that will bring the whole idea of your home minimalism meaning. The idea is not to go so simple that the art is bringing no meaning to the room. Make sure the art is meaningful. It has to draw people to it and bring out good feelings. And most importantly it has to be art that you love.

The first step of decorating your space is to declutter. Take out all the non-essentials in your home and remain with the essentials.

When my friend Earny was starting his home minimalist journey he impressed me when he took everything in his home outside. He is an attorney so he said that everything he owned was suspect of being a non-essential item until it can prove its usefulness in his home.

I watched him for over a week go through all his items and he only took back in what he was fully convinced was useful and essential to him and his family. What was a “maybe” was put in a box and kept in his garage.

Then he had a big garage sale to sell most of his items while the rest were gifted to his family and friends. I got an antique piece of art that I loved from the items he was gifting. He used to hang it in his living room and now it is in my guest room. I was lucky to be there when he was doing this.

Decluttering will help you take out the excess that will take away the attention from your focal points. You do not want any other item in the room competing with your focal point. If you decide to go with two focal points make sure they both complement each other to avoid having them fighting for attention. This attributes to having too much.

Use quality art items. Low-quality art is going to wear out really fast and your room will become dull and disorganized. When you use low-quality paintings for example, there is a high chance that it will fade or start



to chip. The art will not be beautiful anymore and it will ruin the beauty of the room.

Go with quality to make sure the art serves you for the longest time. I am a believer of possessing quality items and I believe that as long as it is of good quality it can last forever. We see museums displaying art that was created from as early as the fifteenth century if not earlier. It is because the art was of good quality and it has been well preserved throughout the years.

Even when you get the quality decorations make sure to clean them with the required cleaning equipment and to maintain them.

My son threw a ball in the house and knocked down one of my paintings. My love for him kept me sane but I was so bummed out because I had kept it in good condition from the moment I purchased it. Maybe I would have given it to him as a housewarming gift when he moved to his own home. Well, he made himself miss out on something good by defying the rules of no-balls in the house.

I have found that when I use enough light in my home I am able to make my space brighter and more lively. My windows are big enough to soak in enough sunlight during the day.

I use good quality glass for my windows so that the sunlight is not reflected away from the room but is allowed to come in. Talk about quality. And I have nice lights to be used when it is night time. Using too much light will blind you.

Keep in mind that too much light will have adverse effects on your home look and your sight. Remember this when you are buying artificial lights to fit in your home.

Good lighting will highlight your decor well. Decorations require good illumination so their beauty can come out more. When a room is well lit, it is also lively and not dull making the space warm and inviting.

It is very important to follow the design of the room. Look at how everything has been placed in it. By this I mean take into account the

position of the door, windows, and the room's accessibility to the rest of the house. This is supposed to determine how you will place everything in the room.

You do not want the art in the dark corner of the room, the plant and flowers too. There are some items that require light to bring out their beauty so they should be placed in areas where they will get good lighting.

Always make sure that everything placed in your home are items you love. If you love them it means they tell something about who you are. And you will have achieved personalizing your home.

When decorating your children's rooms and other rooms in the home that are shared make sure the items also show who they are. Let them fit their personality as well.

Have a neutral base so your art can stand out. Using a bold color from your base will take away the attention from the decorations. It may even create a color clash between your walls and decor. There is no need for such competition of items in your home. With a neutral base, you will be able to ensure the beauty of the art.

## DECORATING THE ROOMS IN YOUR HOME

There are so many things to be considered when decorating a room. You have to know what you each room is used for and the best way to ensure it achieves its purpose. It will be disastrous to just place art and other decor freestyle without taking into consideration the function of the room.

Here is what you should keep in mind when decorating these rooms (remember to keep it simple):

## LIVING ROOM

Your living room is probably the first room you walk into when you get in your home. It is somewhere we are supposed to sit with family and friends and relax while having a good time.

Because it is a relaxing room you want everything in it to be simple. It should not be somewhere your mind is put to a lot of work trying to take in all that is happening around it.

The lighting in this room should be good too so that it brings life into the room and makes it beautiful and peaceful. I do not keep my TV in this room because I want it to be a room where people can relax and talk without distractions.

Before when my TV was in here there was a lot of noise and confusion when my children were watching their show and I was trying to make conversation with someone. Or when I just wanted a quiet space to relax.

## DINING ROOM

This is the room from where you get to enjoy your well-prepared meal. There is a lot of joy where there is food. And the conversations made in this room are lively and amazing too because everyone in the room is filling his/her stomach. You do not want decor that will take away the attention from the food and conversations.

Keep it simple. Let the room be welcoming to people. The decorations should welcome them for food and to have a good conversation and laugh. I would advise to have one focal point in this room. Just one that people can focus on so they do not leave the conversation or their food because they have their eyes and mind on so many other things.

## BEDROOM

This is where you sleep at night. Your bedroom is your top relaxation room. It is a room with a bed that allows you to close your eyes and drift off to slumberland. If you have so much going on in this room you will not get quality sleep. Forget the sleep, you will not get the chance to relax.

You need to do yourself the favor of making sure your room is simple to cater for your needs. The art should be something that brightens the room during the day when you are awake and at the same time soothes you to sleep when you want to sleep.

Too much decorations will make your mind work towards deciphering it. And art that does not soothe you to sleep will have you getting bad quality sleep because you will be awake most of the time.

Decongest your room and allow light to come in both naturally from the sun and from the lights you have fitted in it.

## BATHROOM

This is an equally important room in the home. Parents, we know how much peace and privacy the bathroom brings us. It is a time you get to be on your own because who follows you when you are going to do your business? Well apart from your toddler that is attached to you?

Give this room soothing art. Let the decoration be something that will give you peace for those few minutes before you go out again to face all the responsibilities.

## ASK FOR ADVICE

Simplifying your art can be a challenging task. What makes it challenging is knowing the line between enough and too much. Well lucky for you there are people that have dedicated their lives to this. Find them and let them help you.

There are enough specialists out there who will help you decorate your home as a minimalist. You can also watch videos online and read blogs on the same. Look at many minimalist homes and see how they use their decorations.

It is risky to ask for help if you do not have any knowledge on this. This will mean you do not know what to want. Let the specialist advise you on what you want, not what they can give. They should be able to bring your dreams into reality. And you should be able to love your home.

Always keep in mind that less is more, and to bring in meaningful decorations into your home.





## CREATE A NEUTRAL BASE

Your minimalist designs will become more beautiful and enhanced if you have a neutral base. These neutral bases allow you to be spontaneous with the colors of your decoration details. You do not have to worry about your couch set color not matching with your walls.

Despite common belief, neutral colors are not boring. How you incorporate it into your home is what matters. I have seen the work of designers who know how to accessorize a room to make sure the neutral colors in the room are actually the main piece of art.

And I am of the opinion that neutral colors are fun. You can play with the colors as a minimalist to create a design that will go well with your art and furniture.

I find that if you want to go with bold art and furniture colors then a neutral base will give them the attention they need. You cannot have your furniture and walls competing for attention. That will create something I like to call “eye chaos”. This is when your eyes are competing between a lot of bold colors trying to see which one will dominate the other.

For a minimalist home to be successful the decoration has to dominate the base. A neutral base will bring life into your furniture and art because it is giving it room to stand out without any competition around. I find it easier to notice the yellow seats when the wall has a neutral color like white or very light beige than if the wall was painted bold blue.

You may actually miss the color of the seats and just see how bright the walls are. You will also miss the other works of art on the walls because they have been drowned by the blue color of the wall. Actually, your home will look chaotic and disorganized no matter how hard you worked to place everything in order.

This is the reason why art galleries and museums usually use neutral colors for their walls. They do not want anything taking the attention away from the art pieces so they make sure to make it as neutral as possible. And this is why it is easier to notice even the finest detail in a piece of art because the neutral base around it gives you the concentration you need. The base is neutral but it is complimenting the art.

Neutral colors have an earth tone feeling. This is why they are commonly referred to as earth-tone shades. They give a room a natural and comfortable feel. Walking into a room with neutral color paintings gives you a warm and comfortable feeling. You will literally feel like the room is calling you to it.

This feeling may not be felt when you walk into a room with dark shade colors. It feels like someone is throwing something at you and you have to sit there and stay with it. You will immediately have the feeling of too much going on at the same time.

It is worse if you have a home with dark shade wall paintings and you come back home after a long and tiring day. The peace you are looking for will not be fully met.

## NEUTRAL COLORS

Every color in the world has its neutral form. A true neutral shade is either brown or grey looking. This shade is achieved from tinting bold colors to give them a more simplified and calmer look and feel. Tinting a bold color makes its neutral form look like an undertone of the main bold color.

Going with neutral colors does not mean that you have to stick to grey, white, or brown. Tinting out different colors brings in the same effect. Like tinted orange has an orange-brown shade to it that is really amazing. If you are an orange color lover there is still hope for you.

And the best thing is that neutral colors can be used together to give a complementary look. Yes, they can complement each other in a room to give a perfect and beautiful finish. This is something very hard to achieve with darker shades because both will be fighting to dominate the other.

The worst thing is the fight will be happening in your mind either consciously or unconsciously. I find it bearable to endure such when I am not home rather than having this eye chaos in my own home.

With neutral colors when used together work towards giving one final outcome. The color actually blends in together to look like one. How awesome is that? And guess who gets to enjoy this eye candy? You! So make it happen for you today.

When painting your walls, you can start with a good transition color like white. This amazing color goes with everything. Or you can go with black too. But a very light shade of black. There is a high risk of having a wall with a bolder shade of the color because it will take away the attention from the other walls by making them look dull.

Imagine a room with a wall painted a bold shade of red and another wall painted a tinted shade of orange. The neutral color wall will just look white because it is too light than the red wall it sits next to.

Transition colors like white and beige can be the base. This will make the appearance of the neutral colors even more enhanced. Painting a neutral color on a wall without a base will take away its true potential as the color will not be able to stand out. Most of its color will be lost.

Ladies who use makeup you know what I am talking about. If you want to achieve an intense smokey eye then you need to use your concealer on your eyelids to give a good base so the main colors pop. This is usually done mostly when you want to use neutral colors to give a more natural look.

Men with no makeup experience then you know this from your car. When you want to paint your car, you must start with a neutral base so the main color can pop out more and better.

## ACCENT COLORS

A neutral color looks complete on its own. There is usually no need to use accent colors with it because it will still have its own shine. But it is okay if you want to add the extra pop. You can go with accent colors that will make the room brighter.

The accent colors will take away the monotony of your neutral-colored walls and bring more life to the room. Just remember to keep it simple.

One way you can use neutral and accent colors is following the 60/30/10 rule. Here you chose one color to be the dominant color. Your dominant color should be your neutral color. This is what should be more emphasized in the walls of your home. So it should account for 60% of the color of your walls.

Then 30% of your walls should be painted with a secondary color. This is mostly another neutral shade that is being matched with your primary dominant neutral color. The idea is to have your dominant color stand out then another neutral color to blend in with it and make it stand out more.

10% of your walls are to be painted with accent colors. The accent colors are in most cases bolder shades. It has been reduced to only 10% so it does not dominate the room. A little bit of bolder shades go a long way in bringing more life to your space.

## PERSONALITY

A neutral base on your walls says a lot about you. It shows that you are a simple person who does not like complications in life. The colors you go with for your neutral base show that you are welcoming and open to different things in the world.

I found myself becoming a very deep person in my life after I became a minimalist. This trait became more pronounced when I decided to change my home to a minimalist home. My wife jokes and says that I have become deep because I have nothing in my brain. I think what she means is I now have time to think about things in depth because my life is not complicated.

The neutral bases give me the simplicity my mind needs in order to concentrate more on important things. See how something as simple as your wall color can influence your mental health and determine who you become?

The minimalist life is geared towards having you think critically about how everything in your life influences you. Now that I am a minimalist, I understand why a psychologist's office and home are kept simple and have neutral colors on the walls. Because it makes the clients feel welcome and accepted.

It allows them to be themselves and to share what they want. A room with too much going on would take them away from the conversation. Because they would be more focused on the paintings and other details rather than being invested in reflecting on their life and concentrating on the conversation.

Choose colors you love. Whatever color it is, it can be tinted to form a neutral version of it. Do not feel compelled to go with colors like white, beige and brown only because they are the colors you see on most minimalist home pictures on Pinterest.

No matter how good the color looks if you do not like it you will not enjoy it. Embrace who you are and pick colors that appeal to you.



## MIND YOUR SPACES

If you have a lot of light coming into your space then it is good to go with an illuminating white tone under base. This will make sure that even when you paint the neutral color over it your walls are still reflecting enough light to bring life to the whole room.

Take advantage of this gift of light and use it to your advantage to accent your home and bring more beauty to it. A dark shade undertone for this home will make the walls absorb the light instead of reflecting it. And it will be a waste of the beautiful light that has been given to you.

## TIMELESS DESIGN FOUNDATIONS

Use neutral colors that will create a timeless foundation for your home. Your walls are your base. Let them bring life into your home and work to make everything else beautiful.

Your walls are the first thing you work on in your home before you bring in other decorations. This makes them the most important part of the home. Because you get to work on them first, make sure they create a firm foundation for your minimalist home.

Take your time in picking the colors. I suggest that you go with lighter and brighter neutral shades. They have no dull effect and will reflect even the little rays of light to still bring life to your home.

Your walls decide the warmth of your home. Create a timeless foundation so you do not have to keep repainting all the time. This is extra work that will cost you a lot of your time, energy, and money.

## BRING IN THE LIFE

A neutral color is not complete without good lighting. Your lighting is everything in your minimalist home. It will take an okay piece of art to a masterpiece. Because most of its features will be able to stand out.

Make sure your home is soaking in enough sunlight during the day. Let the light fill your space and bring life in. Invest in quality lights and make sure they are strategically fit to illuminate your space when it is dark outside. The lighting will make all the difference. It will take away the gray mood and make the home lively and fun to be in.

Neutral colors are good reflectors of light. They bounce the rays of light to other objects in the room lighting up everything. But darker and more opaque shades absorb light rays. The rays do not bounce back with a lot of intensity and even though there is enough light your home will still look and feel dull and grey. It may be impossible to fully bring life into the room.

I know this because my son wanted his room painted dark blue. There is hardly ever any light in that boy's room but I am not giving up on teaching him the importance of neutral colors and having a neutral base. I hope that one day he will agree to let me scrape off the dark blue and paint his room a neutral shade blue. And the day he says this to me I will go out and celebrate another parental win!

## NEUTRAL COLORS BLEND WITH THE SURROUNDING

Neutral colors will always blend in with the surrounding of your home. They will give you the opportunity to go crazy with the colors that you choose for your art and furniture. Just do not go too crazy, remember to keep it simple.

They are not competing with the bold color choice you picked for your seats and furniture. The walls will not take away the attention from other items but it will share the attention.

It is easier to get compliments like “I love the neutral color of your walls and the painting and plants”. But when you use bold shades on the walls the most you will get out of a compliment is “I love the color of your walls”. That is it. The person complimenting you may not notice any other items in the room unless their attention is drawn to it by something else.

Your plants and flowers will flourish in rooms with neutral colors on the walls. The green of the leaves and colors of the flowers will stand out more and become more appreciated. And they will be getting enough light because the walls are reflecting the light and not absorbing it.

A neutral-colored wall is also the ideal place to hang a painting. The lighting will be better there and the painting or other pieces of art will have the opportunity to manifest their true beauty. I read somewhere that the items in our lives do not like competition. So when one thing starts to outdo the other, the lesser item tends to hide its beauty.

If you are having dark shade walls, the art in your home and furniture will hide away their true beauty from you. And you will not get to fully enjoy them.

Play around with your decoration items and your neutral walls to see the perfect way to compliment both. With this, you can create a lovely room where everything speaks for itself.

In conclusion I want to bring to your attention how living by what you need, understanding the principle of more is less, and embracing simplicity plays a major role in creating a neutral base.

Your home needs to have life in it. Giving it a foundation of neutral color walls is giving the room what it needs. As a minimalist, you are dedicated to living by what you need. So give your home its needs too.

Less is surely more. You do not have to use bold color shades to make your home beautiful. Neutral colors actually do the job better. Dedicate yourself to them and work on making sure the arrangement of the other details in the house compliment it.

Minimalism actually makes it look like the less you try focusing on the complicated the better your home looks. And that is 100% true. Your walls are your foundation. If you complicate them then you will complicate every other thing in your home. And as a minimalist, you have given up the complicated life to live a free and purposeful life that is full of joy, wealth, and prosperity.

Keep your walls simple and everything will stand out. Tone it down with the simple colors to prevent your whole home from having too much going on at the same time. But do not be too simple and make your home dull. Play around with your simple and have a good time.

Ask for help if this does not come easy to you. Hire the help of a professional or ask a friend or relative that has perfected this skill to help you out. They will be very happy to help you with this and together you will create a beautiful home with a beautiful neutral base.

Just like you are what you eat so is your home and what is painted on its walls. Make it a bright, inviting and loving home.



## CREATE A SMART STORAGE SYSTEM IN YOUR HOME

*A*s a minimalist, you have to find the perfect way to store your essential and non-essential items to make sure your home retains its good organization. If you cannot have a good storage system, then you will find maintaining the beautiful space in your home very hard.

With good storage, you will appear to have fewer items than you actually own. Because all your possessions have been strategically placed to make sure they are occupying the least space possible and creating room to have a beautiful open space.

The process of decluttering your home is very essential in the minimalist life. It is what makes sure that your space is maintained because you are removing non-essential items from it. While you keep in sight what is important to the room to help it achieve its function.

But sometimes, as discussed in previous chapters, a non-essential can be an item that is not in use in the present but will be needed in the future. By this, I mean that these items are not used daily but in the future you will definitely require its services.

If you love going camping, this is not an activity that is done every day. Nor do you require to keep your camping gear inside your home. The tent and sleeping bag do not need to be hurdled up at the corner of your living room waiting for you to get on the road again.

These items are important to you because you will need them to be comfortable at a later time in your life. But they do not need to take up your home space. Such items should be kept in storage. They should be stored somewhere else carefully. Somewhere they can be accessed when needed so they do not ruin your beautiful home space.

But you should not hoard things and fill your store with the excuse that they will become useful in the future. I find that each time I tell myself that

I may need something in future that I know I will never use again I try to bend my life towards needing it.

So I stop living my life as I should just to prove that the particular item will be of help to me. Now this is detrimental to you. If you are never going to use it again and it holds no sentimental value then let it go.

I bring in the aspect of sentimental value because some of our non-essentials are items that were gifted to us by friends and family. The people that gave them to you had good intentions, so it is wise to appreciate and accept them. I think the idea of registering for gifts came to remedy the problem of gifting people things they may not use again.

But now that you received something that you may never use, what do you do with it?

I have a hard time getting rid of such items so I store them in a box that is kept in my garage. (The box is neatly placed and all items in it well arranged). Each time I go through the box and see the gifts I remember the person who gifted it to me and get a warm feeling from the love and kind thoughts that the gifts represent.

Some items may have also cost you a lot of money and letting go of them can be hard. Like your camping gear. As long as these items will be put to use, keep them. They were a good investment. Otherwise, sell them and earn your money back.

This chapter is dedicated towards helping you find good ways to store your items. And to make sure they are not taking up too much space and congesting your space. Every minimalist is allergic to congestion. So even your storage should be done well to avoid it.



## SHELVES

They provide extra space for storing items. A well-constructed shelf can fit so many things and provides different ways to arrange your items. And the good thing about a shelf is it will not take up so much of your space.

Imagine if you had to place your boxes on the ground in your garage. There would just be piles of boxes everywhere. I remember I tripped on a box once trying to avoid another box in my garage. I scraped my knee and the scar reminds me why it was important that I have shelves.

See how the shelves at the supermarket help the staff keep the store organized. Not only that, it is also easier for customers to find what they are looking for. Because they are not rummaging through piles of different items to get to what they want.

And the good thing about shelves is you can have a carpenter build you one with beautiful patterns and designs. So your storage space looks even more beautiful. There are many beautiful shelf patterns these days.

But these days we have the luxury of enjoying everything nice because many people are using their creativity to make the world a better place.

The beauty of your shelves will only be preserved when you organize the items placed on it well.

## HIDE YOUR TRASH CAN

A trash can takes up a lot of space no matter how small it is. This is where you store your trash before taking it out to the garbage disposal. You should keep your trash can out of sight. And let it be well stored so it is not in people's way.

This is important because you do not want your home space to actually have a space for the filth you need to take out. These are non-essentials that are collected from what was essential and need to go out.

And keep all the trash in one place so they all occupy one space at all times. Empty your trash cans frequently. Now that they are out of your sight it is possible to forget about emptying them. But doing it frequently will always have you alert to this responsibility.

## CLOTHES RACK

A clothes rack is the best place to store your clothes. It can be built into your closet or separate. Your clothes rack can be fitted with different compartments that allow you to have space for different clothes.

It is like a shelf. You can even have drawers in it so you have more storage room. I like arranging my clothes by type. So all shirts go together, pants are kept in one compartment, then I have the drawers to keep my handkerchieves and delicates.

I find a clothes rack being better than having an empty closet with no cloth compartments. No matter how much you try to organize the clothes it will still look disorganized. Because everything will be placed everywhere in the closet.

But with a clothes rack you are even more organized because it has shelves. You do not just throw all clothes in but you actually arrange them by their type. Bringing organization to your cloth arrangement.

And when your clothes are organized you have more space in your closet and in your room. Because clothes are not just lying around but they have been organized. Clothes make for good cluttering items. As a minimalist, you have to be above and ahead of this situation to make sure your clothes are not ruining your space.

Make a habit of always arranging your clothes all the time. Arrange them after doing your laundry and never let your laundry basket start overflowing. Always put the clothes away after washing them and make sure they are washed so the laundry basket is not overflowing with clothes. A pile of clothes in a room is always a sore sight.

## SHOE RACK

Shoes just like clothes are good cluttering items. When left unattended to they create a big mess. And you do not need so many of them to clutter your space. Even one pair of shoes can ruin the good look of your space. So how should you take care of it? Get a shoe rack.

You can build yourself one or buy from the store. Whatever is easier for you. Shoes arranged on the floor will take up a lot of space. Because to keep shoes in good condition you should not stack them up together or squeeze them in a corner.

They require enough space for them to have good air circulation and to remain in the same shape so that they stay in good condition. And with a shoe rack you will control the mess shoes make when you walk and trip on one.

I have three shoe racks in my home. One is by the entrance where people coming into the house place their shoes. This helps to keep my front door organized as it is not cluttered by many shoes. Then I have one in my laundry room where everyone in the house keeps their shoes. And there is a shoe rack in my closet where I keep some of my shoes.

I make sure that there is enough shoe space for the whole family and we do not have shoes lying disorganized all over the house.

## HIDE YOUR STORAGE

Your storage should not be somewhere open. It should be hidden. A storage room or garage are good storage areas because they are closed rooms. No one can see them from inside the home.

You may wonder why your beautifully organized storage needs to be hidden from the rest of the home. Well, these are items that you do not need and they will become useful to you in the future. Meaning that you have a lot of boxes and other items up in your garage.

The minimalist idea of having a few items in your space will be lost when you store things in plain sight. Your storage items are going to clutter your space and bring in the feelings of congestion. Imagine your beautifully arranged minimalist living room being next to your open storage room.

It will look like two kingdoms clashing. One neatly arranged with fine decor and has good use of space. And the other is a room full of boxes on shelves.

Make use of storage facilities that will help you hide away your storage items but still make sure they are accessible. If you have no storage unit then consider storing these items in closed cupboards and closets. Somewhere they are not going to be seen when they are not needed.

But if you really have to store things in open space make sure they are in line with the decoration in your home. Let it just not be a pile of items in one corner of the room. Arrange them according to the room arrangement and make them look like an additional decoration to the room.

This can be achieved by grouping same size items together. You will create a beautiful pattern that is pleasing to the eye.

## USE VERTICAL SPACES

These are mostly spaces behind doors. You can hang your brooms and wiping towels behind your storage door. A towel can also be hanged behind the bathroom door. These items that are frequently used need to be accessible at all times so they cannot be stored far.

And they are good cluttering items. A towel and even brooms when placed carelessly will ruin the organization of the room. I know I always notice the towel on my son's floor when I go into his room. But I think my parenting advice is working because he is now making use of the hook behind the door.

## JEWELRY STORAGE

Have a place to store your jewelry. Do not just leave your jewelry lying on the table. And I will add makeup to this list too. Jewelry and makeup items are so many. You have the rings, earrings, necklace, hair clips and other items that form your jewelry and there are brushes, sponges, creams, powders and palettes that form your makeup. You need a system for storing these items or your room will be messy.

And then they will start disappearing. Imagine losing one earring and not being able to wear the pair. Or misplacing your favorite powder brush.

I suggest that you buy a jewelry bag or box and a makeup bag. These bags can come in different sizes and shapes. Their appearance in the room can also be a piece of art. Where you store your makeup and jewelry in beautiful boxes and bags that have been neatly arranged on the table.

The colors of the boxes and bags can match the theme color of the room making them accent the look of the room even more. You can also store them in the drawers in your closet. This makes sure they are not taking up space in the room and not cluttering the table. And you can take them out whenever you want to use them.

## HIDE ELECTRONICS

Most of your electronics are not in use in the present but will be used in the future. They should be stored away in a closet or storage space so they do not unnecessarily fill up your space.

Electronics like cake mixers and an electric grill are not used every day. And most times they tend to be bulky items that take up a lot of space. It is safe to store them away and take them out when their services are needed.

Just make sure to store them properly so they remain in good condition. You do not want to ruin them and make them unusable. Imagine the money you used to buy them just for you to store it carelessly.

I suggest that you put them in their boxes and place them carefully on the storage shelves. Do not squeeze so many items together and cause your items to break. Also do not place them in a manner they can drop at any time and break.



## KEEP POTENTIAL STORAGE

When you are picking your home furniture pick items that will allow for storage. Or when you are building your closets let them have shelves and drawers that will allow for storage. This will save you the hustle of looking for storage facilities.

For furniture, you can opt for a stool that has a drawer. This drawer can hold some items that do not need to be in plain sight like your jewelry.

With storage you just have to be smart about it and work with what you have. Know your space and see what can be done to help you achieve good storage. The trick is to have good organization. When you organize items well you create even more space to store other items. But when they are carelessly placed with no form of organization, they take up more space.

And as a home minimalist you cannot have good organization in one room and another room is falling apart. All rooms have to be well organized for you to keep the spirit of organization. If you allow yourself to be sloppy in some rooms you will end up being sloppy in all.

That is the thing about cleanliness and organization. It has to start from within and should be practiced all around for it to be effective.



## BRING IN LESS, TAKE OUT MORE

The minimalist life is all about dedication to your needs. And having a minimalist home is about giving your home what it needs and maintaining your space.

We are human and everyone loves getting new things. If you are anything like me then you even have fantasies of how a particular item will look and fill in your life after you purchase it.

There are many different ways in which shopping has been made easier in the world. Most people are going into the courier and delivery business because that is where the money is. Shopping has been made so accessible that it is done at the touch of your phone. One phone call can redecorate your whole home with new furniture, curtains, and appliances.

Stores are moving towards improving their online forums so that customers can access the shop online. The world has become such a busy place that most people can no longer afford the luxury of spending time physically shopping.

Online stores are here for them. The online stores are also here to make sure you do not have to take the physical journey all the way to the store. All you need to do is visit the website and cater for shipping and delivery costs.

So now that shopping has been made easier it is very easy to clutter your home all over again if you do not regulate how much you are bringing in. Times have changed and it is not like before when you had to plan on a day when you would go to the shop and look for what you want. Right now you can buy a new fridge during a business meeting and be home in time for its delivery.

If you are not taking out more than what you are purchasing then you will be welcoming yourself to a congested and cluttered home all over again. I am emphasizing the point of how much shopping has been made

easier to show you how possible it is for you to fall for shopping sprees without even trying.

You need to come up with a system where something leaves your home every time something new comes in. So that the new items have space for their accommodation. And this will make you accountable as you will be buying only what is necessary.

The idea is if you have to take out something each time you are bringing in a new item then what is going out is a non-essential item and what is coming in is an essential item.

You will have to go through the house and see what needs to go. Most times you will go into the room where the item will be placed and see what can be gotten rid of.

From this you will know the importance of both items, that is, what you are bringing in and what you are taking out. If you find that everything in the room is essential and there is no room for your items, you should question its importance. If it is an item that will be of use to you in the future, purchase it then when there will be space and use for it.

There is no pressure or rule that you must own everything under the sun. Not all appliances are needed in your home for your comfort. Yes some, like a microwave and an oven are important but others are not needed. If you have a blender that has a crusher then you do not need to buy a garlic and ginger crusher. What you have is already serving this need.

Needless purchases are the cause of clutter in almost all homes. Because we all fell for the marketing ad that convinced us that we will only get comfort when we purchase their item. Only to buy it and place it somewhere it will never be touched or used. Be smarter than this and take control of your life.

Have a deeper understanding of your needs to know exactly what should be in your home. Then avoid shopping for the sake of it. I have

shared how I deleted all online shopping applications from my phone to stop me from opening the application to see what I can get.

Avoid putting yourself in situations where you will fall for the temptation of purchasing unnecessary items and relapse on your new journey.

## ONE IN, ONE OUT

This is an accountability principle. Make it a commandment. Mine is written in my journal like this, “for every new item I purchase, something old in the home must go”.

Purchasing only what I need has helped me follow this commandment. Because most times I find myself needing something because another item I owned has now become a non-essential.

For example, when my babies graduated from using a crib to their own “big boy race car beds”, I gave away the cribs to make room for the new beds. After baby number two I gave out the crib and did not think of keeping it in the store for another child. We only wanted two. I sold the first crib from my firstborn because I wanted my second child to have a more unique crib. So I used the money from the sale to purchase a new one. This way I was making space and money for new purchases.

And I use this for every little detail in my home. When I am purchasing new cutlery the old ones have to have left my home first.

I find it hard to get rid of an item when the new one is already in the house. There is some comfort that comes with having both items in the home and not feeling the clutter and congestion. And slowly the clutter will find its way back into your home if you do not control the situation.

## SHOP WHEN NECESSARY

Stop shopping as a leisure activity or to pass time. Some people say that shopping is a therapy for them but how will it heal you if you are cluttering your home? The therapy you are seeking to calm you down will be short-lived because the non-essential items you are buying will clutter your space again.

I love to shop and purchase new things. The idea of being able to afford different items makes me happy. But I make sure to do it only when necessary.

Become a person who shops with intention and I promise you that you will also have total control of your finances. Do not fall into the pressure to shop when you know you do not need what you are going to get. Be above the situation by having contentment in what you already have.

Do not go out and buy food when there is still enough in your home. Ask yourself, “where will the bulk go”? It may seem like a good idea to buy in bulk but what happens when your space is now cluttered? This is definitely a situation you do not want so only buy when it is necessary.

Find another hobby and leisure activity that is not shopping. There are other ways to spend your time and you will find yourself purchasing less and sticking to your needs.

## LIMIT STORE TRIPS

If shopping is a problem for you because you do not know how to say no, then limit the number of times you visit a store or go to a mall. Stay away from what is bringing the temptation.

There are a lot of promotions, sales, and advertising that happen at malls and stores. It will be hard for you not to fall for any of them especially when you see how beautiful the items are.

Remember that the world is seeing a peak of so many innovations and everyone is creating the best version of their products. Do not think that you will not fall for them.

The problem comes in when you walk into a mall to buy an item but you do not know where you are going to get it from. You have no idea which store in the mall has the item and how much they are selling it for. This leaves you vulnerable and an easy target for sales and promotions. You will be going into all stores that look like they deal in the item and then inevitably look at things they own.

Always do your research before going to the mall. Know what exactly you are going to buy and where you will get it from. This will give you focus when you are inside the mall. You will go for what took you there then leave.



## REFLECT BEFORE A PURCHASE

Do not be in a hurry to complete a purchase. Take your time. Look into your purchase. See what services you will be getting from an item. Ask yourself whether it is a justified purchase or not.

Do you have anything in your home that is performing the task of this other item perfectly? What is your reason for wanting something else that will do the same? If purchasing this new item is a need, this means that the other item you have can go to create room for this new one.

Your purchasing decision is bound to change when you look into the situation several times to see the importance of an item.

## PURCHASING PRINCIPLES

Have principles that guide your purchases. One of mine is I never buy two of the same item when I only need one. This makes me purchase fewer items because I am not taking more than I need.

When you have so many choices to pick from you will get confused and end up buying what is not a necessity. But your principles will help to keep you sane and focused. Like always having a shopping list whenever you go shopping and stick to the list.

Having a budget on the items you are going to purchase will also keep you in check because you are not picking more than you need or can currently afford. So you will stick to essentials.

Also know what the items you are purchasing are going to do for you. The more you know the better for you because you will be able to discern whether something you already have does the job for you. Or if you really need the services that the item offers in your life at that moment. It may be unnecessary now but useful in future. So purchase it in the future when it is going to be a need.

If something else in your home serves the same purpose as what you want to purchase then remember your principle, “I will not buy two when I only need one”.

Now that you know different ways to help you purchase less here are some tips that will help you let go of items in your home:

## LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE

As I suggested earlier, it is important to have a list of what you own. It will come in handy every time you are going to make a purchase because you will not have to go through the whole house again. The list is going to give you all the information about what you own and from there you can decide what to give away.

Items that are leaving your home can either be sold or gifted to people that need them. I usually sell most of my items that are still in good condition so I can get back most of the money I spent purchasing it. If I want an upgrade of the item, the money I get from selling it comes in handy because all I need is to top it up.

## JOY OF GIVING

There is a lot of joy and fulfillment that comes with giving. I always feel good when I see the joy in people's faces when I give them something. And I feel even better when I see them put the item into good use and that the item is helping them.

Giving takes away the stress of having too much. It will help you maintain your space and remove the unnecessary. What is not an essential to you has no business sitting in your space. Take it out and create room for more.

And by maintaining your space you maintain your health.

When you give, you strengthen your social relationships. I always value items people give to me because I feel the love and kind thoughts they had for me when they thought about giving me the item. But I feel even better knowing that I made someone else feel like this.

The bond that is formed from these feelings will be strong. Most people remember gifts they received from different people and they learn to treasure them. And as they treasure them, they treasure your relationship.

It is going to take you a while to master the art of buying less and giving more. But as you learn do not do it from a point of duress. Do not feel like you are being made to live a life you do not want because you have chosen a particular lifestyle.

Rather be happy when you teach yourself how to live like this because you are doing it for your own benefit. You have dedicated your life to your needs and to living free from the bondage of owning too much. This lifestyle is giving you freedom and a better life. Strive to learn how to purchase less so you can have more joy and happiness. And for you to master your finances and stay in your financial freedom.



## CLEAN AND IMPROVED HEALTH

**B**eing a minimalist has a lot of health benefits in your life. Minimalism protects your mind and body from harm and makes sure you are living a life of good health. It is aimed at taking away what you do not need that is causing you harm and leaving you with the essentials that are causing you good.

The congestion caused by all the clutter that was in your space is gone and you now have the opportunity to enjoy your home space. Your home actually gives you the peace and calmness that you need.

Our minds have been created to reflect on our surroundings. This is why if you want to be successful you have to surround yourself with positivity and prosperity for it to manifest in your life.

Living in clustered and congested areas has your mind taking in congestion. You will always have a lot on your mind even when there is nothing really going on in your mind. This is why people get insomnia. You have a lot to think about because your mind cannot break down something simple and come up with a conclusion or a solution.

These thoughts haunt you and you end up waking up in the middle of the night to keep pondering on them. In the long run, your mind becomes tired and weary of everything. You are always just thinking of the same things over and over and not coming up with solutions to help your situation.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Your surroundings can lead you to have mental ailments like depression and anxiety. The congestion in your home translates to a congestion of your mind.

Just like there are many things in your space not giving you room to do some things in your home, it is the same way there are so many things in your mind not giving you room to think.

Your thoughts will be scattered and congested in your mind the same way your space is scattered and congested. Picking a thought to think about and decide will be the same as trying to find an item in your own home. You know it is there but you do not know how to get to it. You often end up rummaging through so many things to find it. And this is not healthy.

I read in a blog that when you rummage through your thoughts to get something you will have to go back in to find its solution. Because solutions to everything lie within us. We have been commissioned with a solution for every task handed to us. The only thing we need to do is find it. But if you have a lot going on in your mind, the solution will be hidden from you.

Depression and anxiety coupled with insomnia will be inevitable. The frustration of not getting things done will catch up with you when your productivity becomes low. It will look like everyone is moving on fast with their lives and you are the only one lagging behind.

You will get anxiety because things will start to scare you. Feelings of inadequacy and not being good enough will fill your mind. And you will be terrified of every responsibility given to you because you will feel like you cannot deliver results.

When I changed my home to a minimalist home, I got a lot of clarity in my life. I now had the power to organize my thoughts in my head. It was

like I got a new shelf with many compartments that I could store my thoughts. Each thought was placed in its own compartment and I was able to reach it and its solution when needed.

Later I realized that my mind had taken in my home organization. It had fallen in love with space, and as I physically decluttered items from my home so did unnecessary thoughts leave my mind.

I got my life back. It had been years since I had a clear thought. For the first time I could decide what to make for dinner without thinking about it too much. I could think about my tasks and decide how to go about them so that I could get the best results.

It was a liberating feeling. My sleep patterns began normalizing and after some time I did not need help from medicines to fall asleep. My body was in a good place to go to sleep and to wake up every morning. It was even easier to take naps during the day when I needed one and it did not affect my sleep at night.



## PHYSICAL HEALTH

A minimalist home will take care of your physical health. There is no longer a lack of organization in your home that is forcing you to tiptoe around all your items. I used to tiptoe around my home when it was cluttered because there were so many things and I did not want to cause a mess.

You see, when you have so many items their arrangement will be fragile. One kick of a box can send a lot of items flying down and causing an even bigger mess of the mess you already live in. Reaching for some items becomes a horrifying task because you have to move a lot around to get to it.

These items end up gathering dust and dust is harmful to your health. Dust is the worst kind of allergen and it does a lot of harmful things to items and to the human body. Inhaling dust will cause you respiratory illnesses. I know I always had a terrible cold back when my home was cluttered.

Many procedures were done to me by doctors to try and find the root cause of my constant colds. I was on a lot of antihistamines and other drugs to help cool down the effects but the processes never worked. What I needed was to do away with the problem.

You never know how toxic something is until you breathe fresh air.

When I started breathing fresh air from my newly styled minimalist home my health improved. I could actually tell the difference in the air. It was lighter and had a freshness in it that was soothing and amazing. Slowly I let go of my medicines and today I do not need to keep pumping my body with the antihistamines to suppress an allergy.

A minimalist home is also well arranged and you will not trip over your own stuff. This may look like a non-issue but imagine tripping on

something and having a terrible fall. You could easily break your bones or even hit your head badly.

All the clutter poses a hazard especially to young children who can fall over anything and get seriously injured. The organization in your minimalist home is doing you a lot of good as you will be able to stop such accidents from happening. It is also easier to baby proof an organized home.

Do not underplay the benefits the space and organization will have in your home.

## ROOM FOR THE IMPORTANT

Home minimalism will help you create room for what is important to you. All your needs will fit into your home and be at your disposal at all times. Your life dedication to your needs will also help you save your money and avoid spending it on things that do not matter.

You will be rid of the claustrophobic feelings that come with staying in a congested environment. And you will be free to enjoy your home. The space and organization will draw you to it. And going home will be an exciting feeling for you.

## FREEDOM

Your life will no longer be controlled by your possessions. You will have the say in what comes in and what goes out of your space. And the best thing is you will get financial freedom. The stress and worry of meeting your needs and paying your bills will not be there anymore. Because by living within your needs your money will be enough to cater to them and to save and invest what is left.

## HAPPINESS

Becoming a home minimalist will bring joy back into your life. You will never again have to live your life to make the items you have comfortable. But they will be working to bring you joy and happiness.

As a home minimalist you are dedicated to living only by what you need. Your home only has your needs. And your needs are what you need in your life to live comfortably.

When you declutter, you will be substituting all the non-essentials to have items that will work for your peace and joy. And you will be happy.

I know that I am always happy when I see everything in my home working as it should. There is a satisfaction that I get in my heart of knowing that all I put in my home is fulfilling my needs.

I even got out of living my life focusing on material possessions. Before all my goals were focused on purchasing something. It became an obsession. I never got the satisfaction I was looking for from the item I had previously purchased. You know that feeling you convince yourself you will have after you get something? Yeah, I never had that.

Instead, I had the thirst to get more. And this dynamic world we live in where there is fast and mass production of everything did not help my case. Let us not even talk about online shopping that made all the items I wanted even closer. This became a terrible obsession because I would download a picture of the item I wanted and look at it from time to time imagining all I would do with it. But I forgot about it as soon as I had it. Yes, I would play with it for a few days then my mind would wonder what I could get next.

You see the madness we put ourselves through? In the end, I had almost five versions of one item. And never realized the potential of any single one. My life was about purchasing more because I felt like I needed to

prove a point to people that I could afford these things. And my finances were bad.

I had terrible credit and every time I started thinking about making payments I became depressed and so sad. And the worst thing is the items I spent the money on were not even giving me comfort. I rarely had a “but the item was worth it” moment. Rather I had regrets.

But when I let all this go, I got happiness. Because I was free. And all my needs were met. I was saving enough money to pay off my debts and I had enough to invest and earn more money.

The joy that fills my heart up to this day is like no other. It washes over me afresh each time I walk into my home and see the organization. Going to each room in the home is therapeutic because the peace that the organization brings gives me joy.

I get happier when I can reach something I want with ease. And I am even more ecstatic knowing that my life is on the right track.

## PEACE OF MIND

Welcome to your world of peace. Here your possessions are working for your good. And you never have to compromise your happiness just to make something you own comfortable.

There is peace in seeing the good space and organization in your home. Your mind will not be congested and you will have deep and clear thoughts. There will be no unnecessary break downs because you are at peace with yourself and with what you have.

The good control of your finances will make you happier. There will be no unnecessary debt incurred and you will have enough savings for rainy days. The stress of thinking that an unexpected occurrence can happen at any time and find you financially unprepared will not be there. You will have confidence when facing the situation because you are in the right mental space to deal with it and you have the resources to handle it.

All attachments you had to unnecessary items will be done away with and it will be your time to enjoy freedom forever. You will no longer be a hoarder and will master the process of giving away everything that is not an essential to you. Never will you let the unnecessary sit in your space and you will have more room to enjoy all the necessary things you have.

Attachments to the unnecessary steal our joy. They make us live our lives to make items and other people happy. This is something I call a slave cage. Because your life is determined by what an external person or thing wants. You are not concentrating on giving your life what it needs but working to satisfy the needs of items and people in your life.

Find your peace by getting rid of these items and people. Free yourself from this slavery bondage and start enjoying your peace. Be the one to make the choice on what you should have and things that are not useful.

And never at any point compromise your peace of mind to make something else comfortable.





## SIT BACK, RELAX AND ENJOY YOUR MINIMALIST HOME

Now that you have followed all the home minimalist rules and organized your home accordingly it is time to sit back, relax, and enjoy your work. Your beautiful home is now ready for you to come in and enjoy the fruits of your hard work. All your efforts will be futile if you do not take your time to enjoy your new creations.

You need to allow yourself to feel the happiness, peace, and joy that your new home is bringing. Enjoy the new decoration and take time to take in everything. You were doing this for your benefit anyway so why not allow yourself to enjoy it.

The benefits of a minimalist home will only be felt when you allow yourself to experience what you have created. Or else your efforts will not make any impact in your life because you will not have allowed your mind to take in the new and improved changes.

Spend most of your time at home. Make your home the place you want to be at all times. If these feelings do not come to you after the minimalism changes then it means you are not spending enough time in your home to love it or your home has not been personalized to your taste.

If you are not spending time to learn about what you have then you will not have any reason to love it. Take your time to enjoy every room. Try out new and exciting recipes in your new decluttered kitchen. Enjoy the new space that is there now that there are not a lot of items cluttering it.

Sit on all the seats in your home. Take note of the lighting at different areas of a room and see what each spot does for you. Evaluate your feelings of this and be aware of your state of mind. See how your life is becoming better now that you have changed your home and given it the gift of space and organization.

If you still do not have the feeling of contentment when you walk into your home, if it still feels like a strange place then you need to work more

on personalizing it. There are many items in your life that are not you and this is what is causing the feelings of estrangement. The process of decorating your space to fit your style may take time. Sometimes we have to try out a lot of things before we find out what works best for us.

It is good to be there for the process and find out what brings you happiness. Your sense of style must not be the same as the pictures you see in catalogs and magazines. You can have different styles than your interior designer and it is good to make your views known.

Make your home your personal heaven. Your place of peace and happiness. So make sure all the things you are putting into it bring these feelings.

## NO STRESS

Enjoy your new-found peace. Everything that was causing you stress is now gone. It is out of your home and has no capability of bounding you to stress. There is no longer the pressure of living your life to make the items in your home comfortable. Now you are in charge and everything is working for your good.

The process of decluttering that you went through has taken away the visual clutter. You have done away with all the items that are congesting your space and causing disorganization. I used to face a new wave of stress each time I walked into my home and saw all the congestion. It was mentally exhausting.

All the items in my home would make me feel claustrophobic. My home did not feel like home. It felt like somewhere I would store all my possessions and I was obligated to go there every day to make sure my items were safe.

So I was paying for a house that I was not enjoying. All the hard work and money earned just to pay for a place that did not bring me the happiness I deserved.

But when I changed my home, I embraced my newfound peace. The stress was gone. I started looking forward to going home every day and with time I became that person that would rather stay home than go out. I found myself whispering to my home before I left every time that I would be back. Kind of like something you tell your lover when you leave them and want to assure them you will be back.

## ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF YOUR SPACE

Now your home has a newfound beautiful space. It is not empty space, but it is space that allows you to move around and enjoy yourself in your home. When you allow clutter into your home you cannot enjoy the space that the house has. Because so many non-essential items will be sitting in the space. And you will be forced to work your way around these items each time you want to move around.

The principle of less is more takes effect here. All the items that you now have will work to meet your needs. You will no longer need to have so much to have validation. Your life will be dedicated to getting your needs and working with them.

Home minimalism calls for home simplification. Another principle is simplifying your space to remain with only what is important for your comfort. As a minimalist your comfort always comes first at all times. So you are simplifying your life to take out the items that bring you discomfort because they are non-essentials. And to remain with your essentials.

But remember not to oversimplify your space with the aim of creating space. Once you oversimplify you take away the personality of your home. Oversimplifying also means that you are not getting enough of your needs which is detrimental to you. Because you will not have what you need to live comfortably.

Enjoy your beautiful space by doing many activities in it. You now have space to read your book in peace and to do some yoga. There is space to make a meal in the kitchen and to sit down and enjoy watching TV. All your items will be within your reach because you can move around easily and get to them. What I found amazing about being able to reach all my stuff is that I was now more aware of what I had. And it made me have full realization of what I needed and what I did not need.

Your new space will give you freedom in your mind. You will no longer be bound by the congestion and clutter that surrounded you. And your mind will take in the new space and also let go of the unnecessary giving you a clear mind to think.

## ENJOY CLEANING AND ORGANIZING YOUR HOME

Do not underrate this feeling. It is a very big achievement in minimalism. You know how hard it is to clean and organize a cluttered home. Even one room can take you the whole day. Because there is too much to move around and get back in order.

You need a lot of mental preparation before cleaning a cluttered space. And carefully moving each item to make sure it is not broken and destroyed. I used to find myself moving the items on one side of the room to the other side. Then I clean the space and move all the other items to the cleaned space. Of course I had to wait for the clean space to dry first before placing anything on it.

Then I had to wipe all the items to make sure they do not dirtify the clean space. Do you see how tiresome all this was? And I had the solution. I needed to declutter and only remain with what was important. See now why I keep mentioning how home minimalism gave me my life back?

I was spending too much time caring for items that did nothing for me. They were not giving me any benefits apart from the status of owning them which I found out later was vanity. It did not matter if I owned it if it was ruining my life.

Sometimes I even hired help to come and clean the house for me. I did not understand people that said cleaning was a hobby for them. In my head, it was absurd for someone to love moving things around and organizing a lot. So I was even incurring extra costs just to keep my non-essential items comfortable.

Now cleaning is no longer a strenuous task for me. I actually look forward to it because I am so in love with my home and I want it to look good at all times. My family and friends do not believe how I have become well aware of all details in my home. I have become so invested in keeping

it clean so the peaceful essence does not fade away. And to make sure I am happy every day.

I even have time to engage in other activities. My general cleaning is mostly on Saturday mornings. I now clean my home and even have time in my morning to read a book or do some yoga. Or I can catch brunch with my friends because I am no longer too busy moving around stuff in the name of cleaning.



## MAKE USE OF THE QUALITY ITEMS

Your home is now filled with less items that are all of good quality. Use them and enjoy them. Make sure each item is giving you its maximum benefits. You have invested your money to purchase these items so it will be useless if you do not take the time to enjoy them.

These quality items contribute to the beauty of your space. They do not wear out or break down easily making them remain beautiful and useful for a long time. And they give you good quality services. There is no more fear of having anything breaking down unexpectedly.

I used to have fear of having to spend money unexpectedly to fix or replace something. Before I became a minimalist I was living beyond my means to accommodate the people in my social circle. So I did not have any savings and I was drowning in debt. I led a risky life of praying not to have any unexpected event that would need me to spend money. Because there was not any money left.

I ended up buying low-quality items that did me no good because every time something would break down. And I had to borrow more money to replace it or fix it. Sometimes I even forgot about the item and ended up living a very uncomfortable life because my need was not being met.

But today I sit in my home and enjoy my quality items. Nobody can ever convince me to purchase a low-quality item in my life. And I take my time to make sure I am ripping off all the benefits an item has to offer. I no longer live in fear of the unexpected. Because I know what I have will last to serve its intended purpose. And if an unexpected event happens, I have enough savings to take care of it.

## FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Becoming a home minimalist will bring you financial freedom. Your life is dedicated to your needs only. So your money will not be wasted on non-essentials. And what remains after purchasing your needs will be saved and another part of it invested.

Investments in assets will always earn you profits. Your money will be working for you to bring you more money. And in most cases, if you play your investment cards well, you will earn more in a year than you would have earned at your job in a lifetime.

The happiness and contentment that you will experience from your financial freedom will be heavenly. There will be no financial constraints where you live your life below standards because you cannot afford some things.

The joy of having no debts wearing you down will also bring you peace and happiness. Enjoy this freedom knowing that you got your life in order so you could earn it. Be happy about every financial improvement you have no matter how small. I remember being happy about making my mortgage payments before the due date and paying my utility bills before I started receiving warning emails. I was no longer living my life looking over my shoulder to see what was coming to get me.

All these benefits will be enjoyed if you stick to your minimalism. Follow your principles and live by what you need only. Let minimalism be a lifestyle and not something occasional that you do when you want to get your affairs in order. Living like this means you are not dedicated to the minimalism course and you are just doing it when you have to.

So most of the benefits and importance of being a home minimalist will be lost to you. Make it a lifestyle so you can understand the importance of

each step and principle. And also for you to enjoy the freedom and benefits it brings.



## CONCLUSION

Home minimalism is aimed at getting your home in order for your benefit. It is a lifestyle that will connect you to your home and everything in it at a personal level. And makes sure that everything you have is important to you. And that you are getting your needs from it.

The process of decluttering is very important. It should be the first task you embark on after making the decision to change your home to a minimalist home. Let decluttering be your detox. Where you clean your system to get rid of all toxic and harmful items that have clogged your way.

Decluttering is also a good way of living with your essentials because the detox took away all the non-essentials. Be happy when you do this.

Just like you have to detox before starting a diet so your body can be able to process the clean foods to get their benefits, so will decluttering help you rid yourself of all non-essential and toxic items so you can enjoy the essential.

The principle of less is more should be your daily mantra. Each time you have the feeling of you need more to validate you remember that less is more. The less you have that is meeting your needs is more important than many items that will sit in your space and have no benefit to you.

When you invest in quality items you will be able to achieve the intention of the less is more principle. Because you will only need a few items that will get the job done well. I find it better to purchase high quality and multi-purpose item than buying a low-quality version of the same that will not meet my needs.

Cheap is expensive. The more low-quality items you invest in, the more money you will have to spend to maintain it or replace it. There is no need to subject yourself to such kind of bondage. Liberate yourself by investing in quality items so you can enjoy their benefits without being cut short by unnecessary breakdowns.

The main idea of home minimalism is living your life with your essentials and forgoing all non-essentials. This means that you are not wasting your time and resources investing in items that will not bring you any good. You are giving your home what it needs to maintain its space and organization. And these items are there to help you with your needs and to give you comfort.

When you live with your essentials you will be able to focus on the most important things in life. It is a way of filtering out what is not essential and staying with what is bringing you peace and joy. And you will not be overworking yourself trying to keep up with things that do not matter in the end.

The book has given you guides on how to make sure you are living with your essentials and getting contentment from them. Sometimes the space in your home may seem like room for more items. But living by your essentials will help you understand why less is more. Because your life will be about getting the little that satisfies our needs and forgoing the rest that causes you chaos and unnecessary drama.

The process of decluttering will help you get rid of the excess and value the essentials that bring you comfort. It will help you be dedicated to quality because you do not want to waste your money on items that will disappoint you in future.

Your new space and organization is your reward. The beautiful look and feel of your home are what you should be proud of. It will give you room for personal growth. Because you are not constantly stumbling into non-essential items. And you will not be giving them the opportunity to waste your time and money because you will not be indulging in them.

Achieving home minimalism will bring you growth because as you are dedicated to giving your home only what it needs so will you dedicate your own life to your needs. There will be no unnecessary obstacles that keep

you from attaining your full potential. Because as you learned to declutter your home so will you learn to declutter your life.

Charity begins at home. You will only master life minimalism if it starts from your home. This is another reason home minimalism is important. Because it will help you master dealing with physical items first. The principles and ideas you are following to achieve a minimalist home are the same in achieving a minimalist life. Starting with physical items first makes it easier to practice and master the principles before you have to apply them in your life.

And you will use the knowledge to deal with your non-physical life. By giving yourself only what you need to lead a comfortable life.

Protect the space and organization in your home. Do not allow anyone or anything to undermine it because you know how important it is to you. And the role it plays in making your life better.

Play around with different styles to personalize your minimalist home and to make sure you are connecting with it. It has been proven that we humans only connect with what feels familiar to us. When something is foreign our minds take time to understand it. If it fits into your life your mind will accept it and you will connect with it. If not, you will repel it and the item will not bring you joy but stress.

Your minimalist home is here to alleviate your home stress and make your home your safe heaven. The place you find contentment, happiness, peace, and fulfillment every time you are in it. Your home will be your birthplace of the inevitable growth that is coming your way.

Stay dedicated to this course. Read this book as many times as you need to fully internalize the principles and the processes you need to take. Take on your new journey with a smile knowing that you have made the best decision towards your life's freedom.





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# OVERCOME RELATIONSHIP ANXIETY

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ELIMINATE THE FEAR BY WORKING ON YOUR  
INSECURITIES TO BUILD A HEALTHY AND HAPPY  
RELATIONSHIP

*"We are most alive when we're in love."*

*John Updike*





## INTRODUCTION

Relationships are beautiful. Having someone you love walk hand in hand with you on the journey of life is such a wonderful experience. Dreams are born, promises are made, achievements are met, and growth is experienced.

As they say, two heads are better than one, so why not find someone you love to walk the amazing journey of life with you?

However, as is common with any relationship, struggles and disagreements often arise. These struggles often cause tension and hardships to a point where it becomes hard and almost impossible to enjoy the relationship. I have heard many people say that you cannot have bright days consistently throughout the existence of a relationship, that there are days when you will face hardships, trials, and tribulations. I believe that these sentiments are indeed true but the distinguishing factor in such situations comes in with how you deal with these issues.

If you and your partner cannot deal with the misunderstandings and problems in your relationship, you will be opening up pathways for fear and anxiety to set in. In my line of work as a counselor I have seen many couples, both young and old, come up to me and tell me they did not know when the fun in their relationship ended. I have also seen couples that have been together for a very long time but are happier than they were on the first day of their relationship.

How you handle your affairs determines the type of relationship you will have. There is no expiry date to the happiness in your relationship. Every day should be a good day for you. Every day is an opportunity to be happy and to experience better and bigger things that should come with your relationship.

Each chapter in this book has been dedicated to giving you and your partner a solution to your anxiety-related problems. I will walk this journey with you and show you how to deal with the hardships when they come

your way. The solutions will also prove to you that these problems are not bigger than you or unique to you. Many other couples have faced them and overcame them successfully. Your relationship does not have to fall into the unfortunate statistics that make up failed relationships. You can be the couple that gets through such problems, coming out of them stronger.

I vividly remember conducting a marriage counseling session for a young couple. They were so in love but had a problem when it came to forgiving one another. And it all started when the boyfriend did not let go of a little mistake that the girlfriend made. Her name is Ella. She had lied to her boyfriend, Mark, about her whereabouts one time when she was with people who Mark was not comfortable with. Of course, Mark found out and started to have insecurities and doubts about Ella.

As Ella explained the situation to me, I understood that these people had been her friends for a while, but Mark did not like them. She loved hanging out with them and was aware that Mark did not like them so she saw it safe to lie to Mark to avoid awakening his insecurities.

From this mistake, Mark started building a foundation for his insecurities, fear, and anxiety. He always felt like Ella was lying to him. Ella on the other hand felt like her boyfriend did not trust her and that he was always waiting for her to slip up to prove his point.

This had led to a lot of toxicity in their union and it became really hard for them to deal with future problems that came up. Their relationship ended up being one where one of them was happy when the other failed. But they still loved each other. I helped them see how their problems had only been magnified because they refused to let go of the past and move on to the wonderful things the future held. The insecurities caused fear and anxiety among them. Both Ella and Mark found it hard to engage with each other because they were constantly waiting for each other to mess up so the other party could take advantage and put them down for it.

When problems are not dealt with when they are supposed to they grow and become unbearable. You and your partner should be able to handle all issues that come your way after you read the wonderful tips in the chapters of this book.

The benefit of facing your fears and working on your insecurities is that you will let go of the baggage holding you back and start seeing your partner in a new light. When my husband and I used to let our insecurities and hardships control our relationship, we barely saw anything good in each other. At some point, the beauty that was in our relationship faded away to an extent that I stopped seeing my husband for the beautiful man he was.

I was always out to criticize him on everything, even the socks he decided to wear. I stopped being supportive of his dreams and always focused on his negative traits. By the time we decided to fix things, I could not remember the last time I had complimented him. This even started to affect our children because of how much we argued and fought.

I remember that when we started fixing our problems, my husband said to me one Sunday morning as I was preparing myself for church that I looked beautiful. I was shocked. My body literally jumped and I could not believe what I heard. Compliments should be common in a relationship and should be a way of expressing love in a relationship. My husband and I had been fighting for a long time that we even forgot to how to do simple things in a relationship like complementing each other.

Therapy helped us. We also worked on our relationship. I got useful tips and intel during this time that I am going to share with you in each chapter. I will hold your hand and guide you in the right way to approach each situation. By the time you are done reading, anxiety and insecurities will be a thing of the past in your relationship. Because you will know how to solve the issues as they come up and not allow them to pile up.

One thing I believe in is that every relationship pits the couple against any problem that arises. Both of you should work together towards fixing

any problem that arises and not let it come in between you. The fact that both of you are working on the problem together will eliminate all fear from your relationship because you have confidence that your partner is in for the change.

I have seen couples stuck in instances where only one of them is working to solve a problem with the other acting against it. Problems do not get solved miraculously. If they did then problems like fear, insecurities and anxiety would be non-existent. There is work that goes into solving a problem. And it must be a joint effort so you can put the problem aside for good. So that even when you forgive each other it is genuine. Because both of you put in the effort to solve this.

Do not lose your partner and give up on a good thing because you cannot have elements of forgiveness. You do not want to let your soulmate go just because you could not solve a problem. Let go of the misconception that if it is meant to be then you will have no problems. Misunderstandings are common. They will always happen. The difference comes in how you deal with them.

This book will help you get back the dignity and sanity of your relationship. If you are facing trials and hardships, or you want to know how to deal with them in the future then read this book.

Do not let yourself waste away precious time that should be spent living in happiness arguing and crying with your partner. Make the decision to be better, this book will show you how to achieve this.

Have an open mind and read through these chapters seeking solutions, not justification for your anger and fears. I will show you how you are the one who holds the solutions to your problems, but you and your partner working together can help make sure you never face the problems again. And even if you ever do face them again, you will know how to deal with them better, together.



## START BEING PRESENT WITH YOUR PARTNER

*A*re you present in your relationship? Is your partner present in it too?

As a relationship therapist, I can no longer count how many times I have heard the phrase, “my partner is never there”, during the many therapy sessions I conduct with couples. The topic of presence may seem like a trivial matter but it is a very important one.

The relationship is yours so why are you not in it?

Some couples tell me that their partners are still living in the past because they constantly bring up past mistakes that they made. After a few encounters with couples like this, I realized that there are many ways in which you can be absent in your relationship.

One of these ways is living in the past. When you cannot let go of what happened before and end up clinging on to it, you will end up missing out on what is presently happening in your relationship. Your partner may have become another person with a new character, but you did not have time for it because you were so fixated on past occurrences.

You can also be absent from your relationship by constantly thinking about how things should be as opposed to how they currently are. Stop this. How things are now is what you should be focusing on. It is okay to dream. But stop living in your dreams. Come back to reality and build that future you desire.

One party to a couple once said to me that her husband was always saying negative things about her weight. He always made comments like, “that dress looks good on you, but it would look better if you lost a few pounds”. Such comments hurt her massively. They affected her esteem and exposed her to harmful conditions like anorexia as she sought a solution to her husband’s sentiments. She ended up being in such a bad state because of

depriving herself of food that she ended up in the hospital severely malnourished.

She was sent to therapy and I was assigned to her. I asked her during our first session what made her feel the need to stay away from food. Her reply made my heartbreak. She said that she wanted to please her husband. When she started to lose weight, she started to feel loved because the hurtful comments were no longer being made. He no longer told her she looked bad; he seemingly was much more receptive to her new shape.

Her husband was so grossed out by her weight that he could not take a picture with her, this changed when she lost weight, he started getting more involved in their relationship. I recommended that both husband and wife be attending the sessions because her issue stemmed from her relationship. They both needed to come in to effectively solve the problem.

The husband was shocked when his wife explained how his comments and criticism made her feel. He was not aware that his statements had caused his dear wife to go to such extremes.

This is the danger of not living in the present. What you are fixated on will take you away from your current reality and you will not appreciate what is currently happening in your life. He was so fixated on the day his wife would lose weight that his actions towards her started to become toxic. This man did not even notice his wife starving herself. He did not even care to know how she was losing the weight.

Another common way in which you can be absent from your relationship is when you are always not there physically. You are always away from your partner. I do understand that there are some couples that have long-distance relationships. But the case I am talking about here is when one partner would rather be away from the other. This results in one of them is being neglected or feels neglected.

You would rather be on a business trip than at dinner with your wife. Or you would rather stay late at work than come back home and spend time



with your spouse. It also goes on to when couples have kids and they spend a lot of time tending to their needs and forget to tend to the needs of their partners.

Who your partner is now and how he/she is doing is what is important. You should always be aware of this all the time and translate your time and effort into this.

When someone is facing anxiety, they tend to be snatched away from reality. Anxiety disengages you from what is happening in the present and takes you to another world. The effects anxiety has on a person are severe, so imagine what it does to a relationship.

My husband loves constant showering of attention. He loves when things about him are noticed and pointed out. Sometimes I tell him that he lives for attention. At some point in our marriage, I became absent. I was not living in the present as my life was dazed. I was facing anxiety at this point because of the many disappointments and frustrations I had suffered in my life until then.

My husband always became disappointed when I did not notice his new haircut or the new socks he was wearing. Before when I was present, I would always compliment him on his nice hair immediately he walked through the day. And now he actually had to point it out for me to notice it. Then I gave a comment like, "oh yeah, it looks nice". My compliments had no emotions. The drama king in him that loves to be hyped up and made the center of attention was not being pleased.

His love language is recognition and my absence made me stray away from it. This made the drift between us widen. If you do not fulfill your partner's love language, he/she will feel unloved. Couples that are not satisfied by their partner feel unseen. They feel like they do not matter, and that their partner does not care about them.

My husband and I argued all the time because we both felt neglected. We were not meeting each other's needs and that made us both feel

unappreciated.

Being present in your relationship tightens the existing bond between you and your partner. Both of you become more connected and can even grow to greater heights. When both of you are working towards the same goal you both become one.

## PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIP

When you are present in your relationship peace thrives in it. Because both you and your partner are connected. Your bond is so strong that you know you have someone you can rely on at any time. He/she coming to your rescue is a guarantee, you never have to be insecure about that ever.

When there is no peace in a relationship insecurity abounds. This is when thoughts fill your mind that your partner is doing something wrong. Where there is peace there is trust. Both of you are confident that your partner is working for the good of the relationship and that they will never do anything to betray you.

Because there is peace, your relationship becomes your safe space. Even when you are facing any hardship or stress in an area of your life you have a reason to smile because you are in a loving and peaceful relationship. Do not underestimate the power of peace in a relationship.

Many are the times when I am facing a hard day but when I think of the beautiful relationship God has blessed me with, I become relaxed. Envisioning my husband's face makes me happy. Even the bad day cannot bring me down. I look forward to going home and cuddling with him or sharing a meal as I tell him of the events that transpired in my day.

There is a sense of assurance and peace I feel when my husband says it is going to be okay. I believe I can do something more when he says I can. Not because me saying it to myself is not effective, but because I know he knows me, and he is saying it from a point of love and additional belief. He believes in me because he knows me and knows what I can do. I am able to derive additional strength from this

## ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE PRESENT

To be present in your relationship you should allow yourself to be present. Give yourself to your relationship. Become an active member who readily takes part in all activities in the relationship.

Anxiety sneaks into the relationship when you no longer know how to control what is happening. You may have been away for a long time and it becomes hard for you to figure out what has been happening in your absence.

When I made the decision to start being more present in my relationship, I was terrified by how much my husband had changed. He had built a wall around himself because he was protecting himself from me. I was no longer meeting his needs; instead, I often put him down. He built the wall so that my actions do not hurt him.

We both worked through this and even sought help from a therapist. He was kind and made me understand a lot of things about my relationship. From the interactions that we had with the therapist; I made the decision to be one too. I desired to help other people who were in similar situations as to the one I was in. The therapist pointed out so many things about us that were a problem which I thought was normal.

Who knew not recognizing my husband's new socks amounted to neglect? I was neglecting his needs and making him feel vulnerable and unloved.

Allow yourself to be present and experience everything in your relationship. You will learn your partner and your relationship better. And both of you will experience better levels of understanding to the benefit of your relationship.

## DISTRACTIONS

Often, when you are not present in your relationship you are allowing yourself to get distracted. There is something that is keeping you away from your relationship. A distraction can be anything. Even your own children can be what is distracting you from your relationship. When you care for their needs only and neglect those of your partner, they become a distraction to your relationship needs.

Your distractions take you away from connecting with your partner emotionally. The emotional part of a relationship is what is most important to it. Long-distance relationships work because the couple has figured out the best way to meet each other's emotional needs. They go for a long stretch of time without seeing each other but their union and their love remains strong because they are able to meet each other emotionally.

As I mentioned earlier, the best way to meet your partner emotionally is by mastering his/her love language. This guides your steps and actions towards your partner; hence you are able to know what makes them happy and feel loved.

For a long time, I struggled with understanding that my husband's love language is a constant show of attention. There are many times he came to me with many happy ideas or news and I shut him down with critical and sarcastic comments. Sometimes I would see him laugh but there was no glow in his eyes. I was letting my sarcastic and criticizing nature distract me from his emotional needs which then made me grow distant from him.

This went on for a very long time and at some point, he even stopped telling me these things. Because I was distracted, I did not notice that he stopped. He just never said those things to me anymore, but he would talk to his friends about it. I started hearing things about him from other people. During gatherings with friends and family, I always heard something new

about my husband like a new interest or project and I started to get scared. Why was he not comfortable telling me his ideas and plans?

I asked him about it one time and he said that my sarcastic comments pushed him away. He explained how I made him feel like what he wanted to do was unachievable and my comments belittled him. I thought it was all innocent and playful, but this was serious for him. I needed to stop letting my urge to make fun of him distract me and to meet his emotional needs of being seen and approved.

A distraction will make you invisible in the relationship. I did not know most of what my husband was doing because I was not present in the relationship to even notice these things. One because he actually hid them from me to protect himself and because I was not curious to follow up on what he was doing.

Step away from your distraction and purpose to meet your partner emotionally and physically.

## PUT ASIDE YOUR AGENDA FOR YOUR PARTNER

We all have plans and dreams for our partner in our relationships. I personally consider myself to be a lady who builds her man. I always have plans for what I want him to do and what he should achieve next. But over the years, I have learned to put my agenda aside and listen to what he has planned for himself.

Sometimes your plans for your partner may not be in line with their plans. If you allow these things to grow in your mind you will end up pressuring your partner to do things they have no interest in. The worst is they will be doing it to please you, yet they are not happy.

Using the couple where the wife ended up anorexic as an example, the husband had a plan for his wife to lose weight and have this model figure he so desired. His wife lost weight to please her husband at her expense. She ended up sick both physically and mentally and would have lost her life in the process.

I always wanted my husband to be a better version of himself. At some point, I lost the line that separated being a cheerleader and being an instructor. I started telling him what he had to do and what he needed to achieve next. By doing so I was not alive to who my husband was, but I was focusing on who I wanted him to be. This is a toxic trait that creates anxiety and insecurities in a relationship.

I started falling in love with who I wanted him to be that the current version of him angered me. It made me feel mad and I thought he was lazy and did not want to succeed. This was the genesis of many fights and problems for us.

From therapy is where I learned to divorce the version of my husband that I had in my mind and to fall in love with who he currently was. And might I say who he is turned out to be even cooler than who I wanted him to

be. I discovered that my husband could think for himself and make his own plans. He has a mind of his own and plans for himself. And because he loves me and our children, he will never do anything to jeopardize our lives or hinder our growth.



## PROBLEM SOLVING

Being present in your relationship will help you be aware of the problems you have in your relationship. When you are away from the relationship you are oblivious to them. But when you are present you are able to identify them and plan on how you are going to solve them. You actively take part in the problem-solving process.

Give your relationship your physical and emotional presence when you are solving a problem. Make sure you are able to commit to finding the source of the problem and fixing it healthily. Do not take cover in sarcasm and criticism to run away from the problem. This takes you away from your relationship. Without knowing it, you will build anxiety in your relationship because you are scared of what you will find when you go in and attempt to solve the situation.

This does not mean that you should be present for the hurt. Do not be an emotional punching bag. When you are going in to solve a problem do not be the one to take all the blame and hits as a form of sacrifice for your relationship. This is unhealthy and will only burden you and cause more problems.

## REKINDLE YOUR LOVE

Couples that have been together for a long time may sometimes experience a fallout. This is caused by the routines they have developed over time in their union that it does not feel personal anymore. You may end up feeling like your relationship is a chore that you have to do every day that the love aspect of it is lost. Such a situation may lead you to become distant from your relationship.

Yes, you go home to your partner every day, but the emotional connection and thrill are not there anymore. Both of you no longer have that spark in your union that reminds you why you are together. It becomes more of a formality than love.

What you need to do is to rekindle your love. You should do something that will birth your love again. Make your union as fresh as it once was. You can redo your vows and remind yourselves of your love for each other.

Go on vacation and experience new things together. Start a new culture of going on date nights where both of you dress up and go do some fun activities together.

Bottom line is you need to remind each other why you are in love. This will bring both of you back to the relationship. It will make your foundation even stronger and you will be able to kick out the insecurities and anxiety that had crept in because you have your love back. It was never lost; you just needed to find it again and give it a new reason.

Rekindling your love will bring you back to your relationship and make you more active in matters that relate to it.

The best thing you can offer your partner is your presence. Both physical and emotional presence. It takes away the insecurities and anxiety. It is easier to believe and trust in someone's love for you if you are present and you can see them working for the good of the relationship. Do not set

unachievable standards and cause anxiety and fear when your partner or even you is unable to live up to them.

Listen to your partner. Concentrate on what he/she is saying and find ways to fulfill their love language. Notice things about your partner and give a compliment every time. It may be just a brief expression of words to you, but they go a long way in building your partner.



## ARE YOU THE CONTROLLING TYPE?

*P*eople with anxiety try to control everything around them to get an outcome they desire. Anxiety is mostly brought about by fear which then leads to people getting frustrated. You live in constant fear that something bad is going to happen. The uncertainties are something you cannot deal with, so you decide to control everything to eliminate them.

Fear of the unknown is the worst kind of fear. Everything we do in this world is a mystery. All we do is hope and pray that the outcome will be as we desire it to be. And we work hard to put everything in place and try to shape the future. It will happen as you envision it if you have no fear associated with its probable outcomes.

Yes, sometimes things may surprise you when emergencies and unexpected things happen. But this does not mean that uncertainties will always happen. You do not need to start controlling everything around you because you fear the worst.

Fear is a great tool of distraction. When you constantly are afraid in your relationship, you are inviting insecurities and anxieties into it. If you start controlling your partner, you will make him/her feel caged and suffocated. It is like telling them that their way of doing things is always wrong and that you are always right.

Your fear may be justified by something that happened in the past. If your partner has lied to you or done something to betray your trust, then your need to control them may be justified. But you are only doing more harm than good.

By controlling them you are more or less accepting that bad things are about to happen. You are pulling these bad things into your relationship and calling them into existence because this is what you are feeding your subconscious mind. What you feed your mind is very important.

You have the conscious and subconscious parts of your mind. Your conscious mind is objective and is connected to your senses. It can be able to tell right from wrong because it sees what you do and how you do it. The subconscious mind on the other hand is subjective. It has no personality and cannot tell right from wrong. The subconscious mind is most important because it manifests in our lives what we believe.

When you have fear that something bad is going to happen then that is what you are feeding your subconscious mind. It will not read your preventive measures through your controlling behavior, but it will feed off the fear and manifest it in your life. This is why you need to be very careful about what you believe. Because your subconscious will manifest it in your life and make it your reality.

The attitude of “things are only right when done my way” is detrimental to your relationship. Your partner will not feel like a partner in the relationship. Rather he/she will feel like a subjective party that is always told what to do. A person whose input is not important.

Being controlling may happen actively or passively. Many couples I have worked with usually explain the behavior of the other spouse to me and I point out that he/she is controlling. A controlling person always wants to be in control. This causes fallouts in the relationship when the other party decides to do things his/her way and you feel offended.

It is either your way or no way. Before my father passed away, he was very controlling. As a family, we were saddened by his death but there was a form of relief that came to us. It was like we had been freed from a bondage we were in for a long time. My younger siblings may not remember this because they were really young. But being the eldest I had experienced firsthand his controlling nature.

My mother could barely move things around the house without him shouting at her and hurling insults. He controlled where we went and what we did with our lives. His fear was that my mom would grow as a person

and become better than him. He felt that when this happened, she would leave him.

To my dad, controlling my mom was a way of keeping her in check. He did this to make sure that she did not discover her true potential. And for the longest time, my mom felt like she could not do anything and that nothing good could come from her. This was until my father died and she had mouths to feed.

Controlling is a toxic behavior. It belittles the people around you and makes them feel like they cannot grow. When you control them, you hinder their growth both physically and emotionally.

Start appreciating that you and your partner are equals in your relationship. Her input is as relevant as yours. It does not matter who is doing better in their personal life, your relationship is not a competition. You do not have to outshine your partner for you to be relevant in the relationship. Being an equal partner means you both meet each other's physical and emotional needs. Both of you know your partner's love language and you are able to serve them.

You can be in control but let it be joint control where both of you are in control. If you continue with your controlling habit one day your partner may decide to stop being submissive and defend themselves. And this can cause a major fallout in the relationship that will cause a lot of problems.

## YOUR PARTNER IS YOUR EQUAL

Your partner is not to be micromanaged. He/she is a competent and mature party in the relationship. Your partner can make contributions and give ideas in the relationship that will also be relevant. Stop looking at him/her as someone who will bring down the relationship if left to do what he/she pleases.

A couple once walked into my office a week before their wedding. The lady was very upset and angry at her fiancé. She was even crying as they walked in. They were the soon to be Mr. and Mrs. Walkers. Their wedding was fast approaching but they were already in for counseling for arguments they have been having for a while now.

I asked the wife to tell me what the problem was. She calmed down and explained how her husband had suggested and went ahead to implement different things for the wedding that she did not approve of.

This started another argument in my office and I let them get at it for a little while. As they argued the man became very angry and shouted that it was his wedding too. I could see the shock in the lady's eyes. It was as if something clicked in her head. Something she had not thought about ever.

This was my cue to start speaking. I asked the lady what had shocked her and she openly said that she had buried herself in the planning and forgot that it was her fiancé's day as much as it was hers. It was their wedding. Both of them were getting married. The guests were coming to witness it for both of them. Both of them would have their friends and family coming to witness the solemnisation of their union.

She realized just how controlling she had been. Her fiancé too was entitled to a say and his input was valid. I walked them through the importance of seeing your partner as an equal and highlighted the need to remember that he/she is also human with feelings, interests, and ideas.



When you control someone you take this away from them. You undermine their life and make them feel worthless. People are different. Your partner may not think like you do or have ideas like yours. But one thing is for sure, he/she is also working for the good of the relationship.

Your partner loves you and wants to see you prosper. Telling them what to do and how to do it takes away the love from the relationship. Both of you will end up tolerating each other. This is dangerous. The emotional connection would be gone and now you are just surviving and struggling to be in the relationship.

Take your partner as your equal. Do not make decisions before both of you talk about it and decide on the best outcome. Always involve your partner in everything that relates to the relationship. Let him or let her be a part of what you are doing. Let your partner feel and know that you appreciate them and what they have to offer. And both of you should build from there.

## YOUR NEEDINESS AND MEDDLING IS ALSO CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR

Being all up in your partner's business is controlling. There was a time in my marriage when I did not want to see my husband go out with his friends. I always checked his phone to see who he was in constant communication with and why. Sometimes if not all times I gave him advice on trivial matters when he did not even ask for it.

This is controlling behavior. I was all up in his business and telling him how he should run his affairs. I said things like, "I do not like you hanging out with him," "why is she always texting you? Does she not know you are married?"

This behavior irritated my husband. I was portraying my insecurities on him. In my head, I would create scenarios where my husband left me for another woman or think that he would be lying to me about one thing or another. I had caught him in a lie once or twice and that was the beginning of this toxic behavior.

As his wife, I thought my actions were justified. Why would my husband be upset with me knowing where he was going and who he was meeting with? Why would he be upset if I read his messages? He was not supposed to get mad at me when I show up at the restaurant he told me he was going to. I had every right; I was his wife. Actually he should have been happy that I cared this much.

But this was a toxic controlling behavior that made my husband get tired of me. He tells me these days that he would feel physically tired when he saw me. I became another fight in his life and yet as his wife he expected me to be his peace and calm.

During therapy, our therapist walked me through how this behavior was controlling. There is a certain way I wanted my husband to act for me to see

that he was not doing anything to betray our union. He told me that the best way to show him that I had forgiven him for his past mistakes is to give him my trust. Being in his business proved I did not trust him.

We are now happier than before. When my husband is out there, I know that he is working for the good of our union. I trust him and I know that he trusts me too. Our love has even become stronger and I am no longer someone or something he has to overcome.

Your partner has his/her own life. Being in a relationship with him/her does not warrant you to meddle in his/her private affairs. Trust that your partner is working for the good of the relationship and that he/she always brings you in on what concerns the relationship.

## CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

The thought that being in control is not what makes you relevant in your relationship is a false conception to have. This is a mindset you should change. I have seen in many patriarchal or matriarchal relationships the man or woman feels that his/her place in the relationship is secured when he/she is in control.

This is not true. Both of you are equal. Major decisions should be made together. And where you have to make a decision on your own on behalf of the relationship you should be able to make the best decision for the two of you.

Your subconscious mind manifests what you believe. If you believe that your position is only determined by control then you will manifest toxic traits in your life to get it. Start seeing yourself as equal to your partner in the relationship and believe it. wonderful things will manifest in your relationship as a result.

My husband feels amazing when I consult him about a particular issue. I see the smile on his face when I seek his input. I also feel appreciated whenever he calls me and asks for my opinion on something that affects him or affects both of us.

Find out what makes you feel the urge to control your partner and work on it. If you have trust issues then it is better if you forgave if your partner did any wrong and trained yourself how to trust. The moment you feel the urge to control them or fully control a situation is the moment you should seek your partner's input. Ask him/her for their input on that matter and see the input your partner has on the matter.

There are many times I have felt the urge to take control of something and when I consult my husband about it I even feel better about myself and

the solution that we will make. His input is always amazing and paired with mine, we are able to create the best outcome for the situation affecting us.

Your relationship is made up of two people. This translates to double the energy and double the ideas that you would need to handle a matter. Take advantage of that and use it for the good of the relationship.

## WHAT TONE DO YOU USE WITH YOUR PARTNER?

How do you speak to your partner? Do you threaten or accuse your partner? Do your words come out as controlling? Is there a demand and threat in your words? Do your words cause a type of fear in your partner?

This means you are controlling. Sometimes you may not wish to sound that way but it is what happens because of the words you use.

Communication is very important in a relationship. How you speak to your partner determines a lot of things. When we communicate we are sending a message. A direct message from the words said and a meaning drawn from the words.

My husband tells me that back in the day my words to him used to be commanding. I honestly could not remember what it was that I used to say until a certain middle-aged couple came for sessions with me. I noticed from the first session that the wife did not use any polite words with her husband. She felt like she was entitled to the things she was having him do so she did not have to ask politely.

The husband on the other hand felt controlled. He felt like a ball that was being kicked from one direction to another. Her words always criticized him and commanded him to do something. But this was not the only problem. I noticed that he did the same to her. So they were both trying to control each other but none of them was being submissive and accepting to be controlled.

Through our sessions, I taught them how to be kind and polite to each other. I taught them the power of their words contain and how they were sending the wrong message in their communication. Saying please and thank you is not a form of weakness, it is acceptance of submission. It is respect. And what her husband needed was to be respected.

I started seeing progress in them when they changed how they spoke to each other. With this change, they were able to fix other problems in their life like how loud they were when communicating. These two could not pass information to each other without shouting. But when you use polite words it is impossible to shout. Can you imagine shouting the words “please” or “thank you” to someone? They will teach you how to control your tone and be respectful.

## CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR IS A HABIT

Possessing controlling behavior is a habit. It can be taught. This is a good thing because you can learn new habits that will shadow this one, you can also unlearn such habits.

Because the controlling behavior is a habit, those around you can learn it too. Your children can pick up this behavior and go ahead to be controlling in their relationships. They can become bullies in school and to their friends.

Children are like sponges. They absorb behavior like a sponge absorbs liquid. You need to change how you act because they see and retain. Never think they are too young to pick up a habit. They are not.

I think I became controlling because it was a habit I saw from my father. You may have learned it from your parents or your spouse. But you can always learn something else and undo it. Teach yourself how to be polite and how to speak to people with kindness. Learn how to see your partner as an equal. Learn how to value his/her input in the relationship.

Do not feel superior to your partner. Both of you should be working for the good of the relationship. Learn how to listen to each other so that you can serve your partner's love language better.

Everyone loves to be respected. When you respect your partner you will not have the urge to want to control him/her. You will respect the input they have and the contribution he/she brings to the relationship.

Do not want your partner to fear you. Fear is not an okay emotion to have in a relationship. It is wrong. And it will undo all the good you had put in your relationship. Fear is like cancer that grows rapidly and may kill the love on its way. I stress that you should see your partner as an equal so that you do not look or feel like someone they have to walk around on eggshells because he/she does not want to piss you off.



Remember to apologize to your partner when you end up controlling him/her. Forgiveness starts the road to healing. Apologizing is the first step. I find new love for my husband each time he gives me a genuine apology. And I am sure you will too. Nobody wants to mess up. It takes a lot of strength and maturity to apologize and it is the right thing to do.



ASKING FOR REASSURANCE IS ABSOLUTELY OKAY-  
ASKING FOR TOO MUCH OF IT IS THE ISSUE

*A*nxiety brings doubt in your life. This doubt is going to make you constantly seek reassurance to make sure things are as you want them to be or had pictured them to be. You are constantly checking up on someone or something to make sure everything is okay and to your standards.

When you become someone who lives for reassurance you end up setting unachievable standards with how you want everything that regards you to be done. People around you start struggling and striving to achieve these said standards. It ends up being a burden on them that will affect their basic interactions with you.

This habit of always wanting to be reassured will seep into your relationship. You will constantly be seeking reassurance from your partner. Seeking your partner's reassurance is a good thing. It is no crime. I love to seek my husband's reassurance on everything I do. I feel like his approval means more than anyone else's. This is because my husband knows me and my capabilities and strengths better than anyone else. He knows what I can do and how good I can do it. So when I am seeking his reassurance I know that he will be straight and honest with me.

The problem comes in when you are constantly seeking reassurance and becoming too much about it. You are always asking how the same thing is over and over again and within a short time you end up becoming a needy person who is too insecure. When you do not get the answers you are seeking, your insecurities start to heighten.

As the saying goes *too much of something is poisonous*, well too much seeking reassurance is poisonous. I feel like reassurance is something that should come naturally and easily from your partner. As much as I seek reassurance from my husband I let him freely tell me what he thinks. I do

not in any way try to control his response. Doing this brings in unhealthiness and insecurities into the relationship.

Insecurities start from within us. For example, if you think you are ugly and you ask your husband how an outfit looks on you and he says, “it looks okay” trust me you will misinterpret the response he gives. You are already insecure about your looks and now you do not believe it when your husband genuinely tells you that you look good. So what do you do? You go back in and ask for a different response that is more to your liking. Something in the lines of, “does it make my legs look too big? Does my stomach look big in this dress? Are you sure? Check again? You are not looking at me, right? Are you sure I look good and I can go like this?”

By the end of these string of questions, your husband is so exhausted that he does not know what to do anymore. He will either lash out as a way of defending himself or he will start telling you what you want to hear, which might not be an accurate reflection. This is what your neediness has pushed him to do.

Stop using reassurance as an indication of your partner’s love for you. That man or that woman loves you. How he/she thinks a dress looks on you does not change the love he/she has for you. You are just insecure and you are portraying it in your relationship.

If you must be reassured to feel loved then welcome to the needy person club. That is what you will always be, a needy person. Your heart will not be at peace and your head will not be in the right place unless your partner says to you what you want to hear exactly how you want to hear it.

Give your partner the opportunity to love you in his/her own way. Stop trying to control it with your constant need to be reassured and your neediness. You are burdening your partner and running your relationship into the ground.

Let your partner make the decision on how to reassure you. Give him/her space to know when to gift you, when to take you out and when to

post your picture on social media. You may be surprised how your insecurities will make you do crazy things. Believe it or not, your partner knows you well enough to know what you need to feel special. He/she knows the right thing to make you feel good and how to reassure love to you.

Give him/her a chance to surprise you. Let your partner have some breathing space and learn to ask for enough reassurance. Not an ounce too much.

## YOUR NEEDINESS IS CAUSING INSECURITIES

I used to think of my husband as my personal diary and viewed him as a mirror that could project what I think of myself to me. I felt like I could ask him anything I wanted at any time. This became an obsession. I suddenly had the urge to always be reassured by him. An urge that was in no way healthy. The poor guy was always on the other side of my tantrums and mood swings each time I wanted him to reassure me.

With time my insecurities kicked in. I started to feel that each time he was not giving me the reassurance I wanted it was because he was out there doing things to betray our relationship. There are many times I suspected that he was cheating on me. Other times I felt like he was done with me and would ask for a divorce soon. And this was all caused by him either taking too long to respond to my text or not talking to me for a long time.

My insecurities led me to start stalking him. I looked for an opportunity to get his phone and find evidence to prove what I was feeling. When I found nothing the first thing I thought was that he had deleted the evidence.

My insecurities had blinded me to a point where I did not see that I was the one working against the relationship. My husband was okay. He loved me so much and would not do anything to harm me. I was just setting unachievable standards that had him stressed out when trying to achieve them.

During counseling he told the therapist that he works really hard to meet my standards only for him to get to the finish line and find that I increased my expectations. It was during therapy that I saw how tired my husband was. The man was exhausted trying to live his life while pleasing me at the same time.

I had pushed him to unimaginable heights and he started to feel like it was all futile because I never appreciated it. Insecurities will make you feel

entitled and forget to appreciate those making an effort to please you. It was hard to please me and my husband was suffering. I needed to ease up and lower my expectations.

Our therapist also explained to me how my insecurities were mine and they had nothing to do with my husband. I had to deal with my own insecurities and find a way to eliminate them from my life. All my husband could do was show me that he loved me. It was not his job to take the insecurities from me because he did not cause them. My anxiety did. And I had to find out how to heal from them.

If you are in constant need of reassurance be sure that the day it will not be there you will not be okay. There is a day your reassurance-giver will be unavailable to give you what you want. Your partner can get busy too or may not have the patience to deal with all your insecurities at the moment.

Always remember that these insecure feelings are coming from you, not your partner. Even if your partner did something to you that made you feel insecure you are the one who let those feelings grow in you.

You need to learn how to love yourself first. Unless you are enough for yourself you will not be enough for your partner. No matter how much he/she reassures you it will not be enough because you have not accepted yourself. You probably do not even believe your partner's reassurance because that is not what you think of yourself.

Accept the love and attention your partner gives you. Stop settling unreachable standards and putting undue pressure on your partner.

## YOU ARE SIGNIFICANT

It is okay to want to be reassured by your partner and to feel significant as a result of the reassurance. But you should know that you are already as significant as you need to be. This reassurance is only icing on the cake or the cherry on top. Without it, you are still who you are.

I am not trying to discredit your partner's reassurance and make you feel like you do not need it. Yes, you do need it. What I am trying to show you is that you do not need to start being needy and insecure because of it. You are already enough as you are. Your insecurities are your enemy because they are what is showing you that you are not.

Unless you learn how to love and appreciate yourself, your partner's reassurance will never be enough for you. As I said your partner's reassurance is the icing on the cake or the cherry on top. We still need the cake. If you are not complete in yourself to be the cake then the cherry your partner is bringing to decorate the cake will have nowhere to sit.

You will always feel a void inside because something is missing. But what you don't realize is that what is missing is from your side. You are causing it. Your cake is not enough or is not ready yet and that is why you feel like something is missing.

Unless you learn how to be enough for yourself your partner will not be able to help you. I also did not understand this concept until our therapist broke it down for me. He explained that my husband was supposed to come into my life as an equal. If I had doubts and insecurities about myself then I was not equal to him. I was not matching his energy. Yet I was expecting too much from him, I wanted to receive more than I could give.

Allowing your insecurities to grow in you will make decrease your self-esteem levels. Your insecurities are showing you how you are not enough.



So you are constantly seeking reassurance to know that you are enough. With time you will forget your self-worth and who you are as a person.

The identity you keep for yourself will become weak and you will need someone to be with you so that you can be okay. You are significant on your own. Work on yourself and grow as a person. Learn to be enough for yourself so that you can be enough for your relationship. It is unfair to lay all this burden on your partner. He/she also has his or her own struggles. You are not being fair to your relationship if you expect your partner to be okay all the time while you are not.

## WHY DO YOU FEEL THE NEED TO BE REASSURED?

Reassurance is an agreement of something you are hoping for. When you believe you are beautiful and your partner says that you do this is reassurance. I always ask my husband if my makeup looks good each time he is around when I do it for myself. It makes me feel good to hear him say it does. Such things give me joy.

But you need to ask yourself what makes you feel the need to be reassured. Especially if you are needy for this reassurance. Why do you constantly need to be reassured for you to feel good?

Your feelings of wanting to be excessively reassured are caused by your insecurities and obsession. You are insecure that things are not as they are supposed to be and you are obsessed with how you want them to be. This is the unachievable standards I was talking about. You have an obsession for how things are supposed to be and you do not want to see that it is too much on your partner.

You ask your partner questions like, “did you lock the door? Are you sure? At what time did you do it? Did you do it like I showed you? Are you sure it locked?” You have an obsession with how the door is supposed to be locked. And you want your partner to match this expectation.

Your insecurities are causing you to keep asking your partner to reassure you about something and then get upset when he/she does not meet your expectations. You forget that your partner is competent enough to come up with an opinion about the situation and say what he/she thinks.

You do not want to push your partner to a point where he/she is telling you what you want to hear. If this happens, then there will be no truth in the words your partner will say to you and you will still be unhappy.

I have observed from the people I counsel that when one party has reassurance issues and is not getting enough reassurance that he/she wants

from the partner, this person starts to seek the reassurance elsewhere. This is how many people have ended up cheating on their partners. You think that you are being underappreciated and decided to look for such appreciation somewhere else.

It is quite unfortunate to watch relationships go down like this. You forget that your insecurities start with you. Your partner has nothing to do with them. If you have become too needy and your partner is not able to meet your neediness then you should not be feeling unappreciated. Your partner has tried his/her best. Your standards are what made your partner fall short of pleasing you. But you decide to see it as a sign of no love.

You need to deal with the root cause of your need to be reassured all the time. Start appreciating yourself and loving yourself more. Be for yourself what you want others to be for you. That is how you are going to be able to work on your reassurance needs.

Your partner is not in your life to make you appreciate yourself more. Rather he/she is there to love you and appreciate you. His/her efforts are the cherry on top. If you try and make it more than that you will end up disappointing yourself.

I was always disappointed when my husband was not who I wanted him to be for me. But unknowingly I was causing unnecessary pressure in his life. I became another hurdle in his life. Instead of being his peace and comfort, I was the opposite. Always making him feel bad about himself because of the many ways I showed him he was not enough for me.

Your partner cannot make you love yourself. He/she may point out the wonderful things about you but if you do not learn to love all of you then you will always be insecure. my therapist told me that the most my husband could do when I felt ugly is tell me I looked good. He cannot come into my head and change my eyes to see the beauty he wants me to see.

By expecting him to do that I am just causing him undue pressure and adding a load of burden to his life. Our therapist taught us the importance of

being everything for ourselves. When you are enough for yourself then your partner is also enough for you and there is no room for insecurities.

## YOU ARE CALLING YOUR PARTNER A LIAR

Constantly asking the same thing over and over again and not believing the answer you got or wanting to hear it many times makes your partner feel like you do not believe him/her.

You are hurting your partner's feelings in the process. My husband used to feel nagged and angered by all my questions. Each time I started he would feel defeated and mentally tired because he was trying to make me see something I was not ready to see.

At some point he became defensive. He started to shout back at me or not answer me at all. At therapy, I learned to understand this reaction because he is also human. He also gets hurt and upset. There is nowhere it is written that he is supposed to put up with my behavior. Making his lashing out justified and my neediness unjustified.

Wanting this constant reassurance will heighten your insecurities and make you start doing crazy things like stalking your partner. I did it so I know. I started going through his phone and reading his conversations to see if he was cheating on me. Sometimes I showed up at my husband's office unannounced or went to a place I knew he was going to see who he was meeting.

He started to feel micromanaged and resulted in lying to me so I would not show up where he was. The feeling was unfortunate for him and it was killing our relationship. Slowly the love started to be forgotten and we started tolerating each other. It became heavy on the children too because the fights were now constant.

I am happy about where we are now. I am happy that I love and appreciate myself more and it has made me love and appreciate my husband more. I can now be more for him because I am more for myself.

It is okay to want to be reassured by keeping it to a manageable level. Do not go overboard. You are loved and appreciated by your partner. Any feelings of less are your insecurities trying to convince you that you are someone you are not.

Healing from always wanting to be reassured may take time. It will take time for you to learn how to love and appreciate yourself again. And it will take time to build what your insecurities led you to break. But it will all be okay. Make sure your partner understands what you were going through and knows that you are working to make things better.



## BE VULNERABLE

*A*nxiety works in two ways. It either makes you highly dependent on being assured or it makes you closed off to the world. By being closed off you become someone that hides his/her feelings from the world. You never show what you are feeling nor do you talk about it.

I have counseled many people that started developing this feeling when they were younger and thought they would be better by the time they got into a relationship. But this was not the case and they found themselves being closed off about their feelings. Their partners did not know them well and it was hard for them to develop a deep connection and bond with their partner.

Hiding your feelings and being closed off from the world is a habit. You eventually make it a lifestyle if you have practiced it for a long time. Moving from such behavior is not going to be easy but it can be done.

I used to feel very weird and uncomfortable when I was opening up to my husband back when we were still dating. My constant fear was what he was going to think about me and would he use this information against me in case we broke up? Such fears can paralyze you and make you opt not to open up and share your feelings. There were many times my husband complained that I was a closed book that he tried so hard to open but I was not giving him a chance to read what was inside.

Being closed off is a way of defending yourself from the hurt and rejection that comes with being open. Not everyone will appreciate your openness. Some people will make fun of you and ridicule you but that is fine. Your partner will not do it. Rather he/she will be happy that you opened up to them and let them into your life to see what exactly goes on in your world.

Many times when we were dating I would tell my husband that I did not like cheese so I did not eat foods that had cheese in them. The issue was



that I had a low metabolism and complex foods like cheese made my stomach bloat because my body was not able to break them down. I was scared to tell him about my health situation and felt that he would make fun of me or even leave me.

When we had sleepovers, I would hide myself to take my medication. My being closed off was a way of me protecting myself from rejection I would face in case my boyfriend did not understand my situation. I was also carrying the load of being closed off. It was not easy hiding my condition away because there were times I needed medical attention and would have to go to the hospital.

The day I opened up to him, I felt lighter. It was like a load had been lifted from my heart. My husband looked up to me and smiled. He told me that he has known for a while. One time when he was at my place he stumbled upon my medication. But he did not know exactly what was going on with me. I opened up to him and explained everything and he understood. He even did his own research to help me find ways I could live better.

By opening up, he was able to understand exactly why I could not eat cheese and other foods. He also understood why I eat what I eat and many things about me. My moment of vulnerability brought us closer together.

I always encourage couples to enjoy the feeling of being vulnerable with each other. This should however not amount to neediness and nagging. Be healthily vulnerable with each other. Let your partner know you. If you are together it means you have special feelings towards each other. These feelings may die unless you find ways to connect deeper with each other.

Imagine being in a relationship and your partner does not know you. The essence of being together is lost because both of you are still strangers to each other. And you risk your partner picking up the habit too.

## YOUR PARTNER CAN BECOME CLOSED OFF TOO

Your partner can decide to match your energy and hide his/her feelings from you too. This is very dangerous and it will amount to a toxic relationship. A relationship where both parties do not talk about themselves and their feelings.

If you are closed off it is expected that your partner may decide to stop being open about his/her feelings too and start to keep things away from you too. Your partner could feel like he/she is always open about his/her feelings and comes to you and tells you but you do not do the same with your own feelings.

Your partner in this situation may feel like there is no trust in him/her. My husband was hurt when I did not open up about my health and many things in my life. He wanted to be there for me and to help me in whatever way he could but I was not giving him a chance to. He also started hiding things about himself from me and it felt terrible. It was hard not knowing what he was thinking about all of a sudden because he always told me.

When you are not vulnerable and you do not open up it is like you are rejecting your partner. Fearing what they will think is understandable but give your partner the chance to actually react as he/she would. Stop rejecting your partner because of the scenes of rejection you have made in your head.

## WHAT IS VULNERABILITY?

Maybe you are not vulnerable with your partner because you do not know what vulnerability is all about. Being vulnerable is easily misinterpreted and misrepresented by being clingy, needy, and nagging.

True vulnerability is when you choose to be open about your emotions and feelings with your partner. It is when you open up to your partner about what you are feeling and thinking and you are not scared about what he/she will think about it. True vulnerability is when you give your partner free front row seats to your life. You open up your life to your partner and let him/her see you for who you are.

When you are being vulnerable with your partner you choose to express your feelings, emotions, ideas, opinions, different things about you like your life story. You present yourself to your partner as who you are. At this time, you are taking off the mask and putting aside all behaviors that you are used to as a result of being closed off. My therapist calls it taking off the makeup in your life and showing your partner your raw face.

It is really fun and good to do this. There are many times in our days and our lives that we have to be people we are not so we can survive and succeed in those sectors. For example, I have to be very understanding at my counseling job. Therapy is a passion for me because I love to help people solve any issues they may have. For me to be good at my counseling job I need to learn the art of being understanding. But there are times I do not want to be understanding. There are times I just want to scream and shout my opinion and not care what people have to say and think.

And it is refreshing to know I can be like this in front of my husband and he will still be there. Some things do not make sense to me sometimes either because I have not experienced them or because I know that the outcome can be disastrous and I can talk about these things to my husband.

At least I have an outlet. Letting these feelings and emotions pile up in me will cause unnecessary stress and baggage in my life that I do not need.

## VULNERABILITY IS BEAUTIFUL

Being vulnerable does not mean you are weak. It means you are open about your emotions and your feelings. Before I knew this I also thought that people that opened up about their feelings and emotions on social media were weak and seeking sympathy. I see now that they are only being open and trying to pass a message to people that are going through the same things they are.

It is a way for them to reach people that may be suffering alone and to show them that their situation is not unique to them only. This is the beauty of vulnerability. You touch the souls of many by being open about who you are. Imagine the good it can do for you and your partner in your relationship.

There is one thing I hate in my relationship and that is hearing something about my husband that I did not know from someone else. I usually feel like he did not trust me enough to let me know. Such situations make me see that there is a gap in the relationship and probably a problem on my side that is making him closed off. And we both work towards remedying that so we are as open as possible with each other.

Vulnerability is beautiful because you are showing your partner the raw you. Your partner is able to know you deeper and clearer. Many things about you will become clear and understandable. There will be no need to be someone you are not when you are with your partner.

When I started dating my husband, I was scared about opening up to him because I felt that he had fallen in love with the face I show the world. Also growing up with a single parent and having younger siblings that depended on me forced me to grow up and become an adult at a very young age. This made me mad at the world. I was upset that I had to face all this hardship at a young age. And it made me more closed off to the world.

I did not want my husband to see the struggles I have had to endure. I did not want him to know about my financial struggles and how I was working hard to try and make ends meet for my family and myself. Even if I opened up I would leave some information out so he would not know more about it.

At therapy, I was taught to let it all out. My habit of withholding some information started small but it ended up seeping into our relationship. I would hide some information from him and not tell him the real truth. This would hurt him when he found out because it showed a lack of trust on my side. And probably this is why he hid things from me too. I am really grateful we were able to work past this.

Your partner will appreciate and love you more for showing him/her parts of you that you do not show everyone. You know the excitement you have at work when the boss lets you into a secret that other employees have no idea about? That is the same feeling your partner will have. He/she will feel privileged for having inside information.

A new bond will be created between the two of you and your relationship will become stronger. Trust, love, and happiness are built from this. But you need to take the bold step and start being vulnerable with your partner. The thought of being vulnerable should not scare you, embrace it.

## STOP PLAYING IT TOO SAFE

If you are closed off you always play it too safe to make sure you do not get to “vulnerable levels”. You do not want to get to a point where you actually have to share something about you. What happens is you become so careful about what you say and what you do. Your life becomes too calculated that there are no surprises with you.

Surprises are nice sometimes. My engagement was a surprise and I loved how my husband planned the whole thing. Most of the birthdays in my house have been surprises and I know how exciting it is to plan and to actually surprise the person.

Be vulnerable so you do not have to play it safe all the time. So you are okay with a conversation or a situation taking a turn where you will be required to share something about you. Wear your vulnerability like an armor so people do not use it to bring you down. Sharing about yourself with your partner should be your best thing to do.

## VULNERABILITY CAUSES CONNECTION

Share your deep thoughts with your partner and let him/her know you well. Stop letting the fear of what your partner will think about you control you and cause you to shy off and hide your feelings.

When you open up with your partner a connection is born. Your partner is able to understand different things about you. And he/she is also able to open up to you. Both of you will know what goes on in the other person's world. It is a good feeling to have an idea what your partner is thinking. It makes the relationship easier because you are not risking pissing him/her off at any time.

Your partner is able to know the things that interest you and you will know the same about him/her. Vulnerability makes your love languages clearer and both of you will be able to service them better for each other. Both of you will concentrate more on your partner's interests and how to love each other better through your love languages.

Arguments will be less because now you know what ticks off your partner. At least you will not be walking on eggshells trying as hard as possible not to upset your partner. You know what upsets him/her so it is easier for you to avoid those things.



## START SMALL

You may have experienced rejection at a time you were vulnerable. Maybe your experience of vulnerability in your previous relationships or life experiences did not go well. Being closed off after this is understandable. But it does not mean that trying again will have the same results.

This is a new relationship with a new person. Give him/her the chance to know you. The real you. The raw you. The you who is not putting up a face to cope with the world.

The best way to become vulnerable in your life is to ease into it. Start small, one step at a time. Give yourself time to learn this new way of living and to understand and appreciate it.

You can start by complementing your partner's dressing, commenting about a movie you both watched together, giving ideas about how both of you should decorate your home and more. Something small that will make the whole vulnerability experience not feel heavy on you. Do not dive into it and take it all upon yourself at once. But give yourself time to learn about it.

You are putting yourself out there slowly and you are not afraid about being shut down. This is easily done when you start slowly. You will also learn more about your feelings when you do this. It is possible that you forgot how you feel about different situations because you were more focused about hiding your feelings away.

This will give you an opportunity to know yourself better even as you start learning about your partner.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR PARTNER'S FEELINGS

As you open up about your emotions and feelings so will your partner do the same with his/her emotions and feelings. You should use this as an opportunity to know him/her more. Use this as the time to understand your partner better. Take note of all the information you are getting and use it to relate with him/her better.

Your partner is also being very courageous here. He/she is also taking a leap of faith and showing you who he/she is. Do not take it for granted. The same way you do not want to be shut down is the same way you should now shut him/her down. Be accepting and inviting like you would like him/her to be with you.

Welcome the information and show your partner that you appreciate it. Then put it to use. Let your partner see that you hear what he/she is saying and you value the information being passed.

## ALWAYS BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR STRUGGLES

We are living in a world where everyone is showing you the good side of something and not the bad. People barely talk about their struggles like they do their achievements. If you go on social media you actually risk feeling like your life is doomed because everyone else seems to have it easy.

But the truth is everyone struggles in one way or another. Your partner does not expect you to be perfect and have no struggles. So open up about what you are facing. Even if your partner has no resources to help you get out of the situation at least you have your own personal cheerleader who is cheering you on and holding your hand through it.

I had a lot of financial struggles when I met my husband and the worst thing I did was try and cover it up. I tried to act like it was all okay yet I was working three jobs to be able to pay the bills and still go to school. All these struggles were too much on me already and hiding it from my partner made the load heavier.

But when I let it go and explained everything to him he even offered me a solution. My husband helped me secure a job with a company that was paying me double what I made from all my three jobs. I even had the opportunity to concentrate more on school and still pay the bills. My moment of vulnerability offered me my solution. And it can help you too.



## LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

When in a relationship it is easy to be immersed in your partner's needs and forget about yourself. It is a normal habit that happens to almost everyone in a relationship. You can go shopping and only see things to buy your partner and not yourself. And in the relationship, you are more concerned with what your partner wants and not what you want.

While this is normal for people in relationships to act like this, I do not encourage this behavior. I stress self-love to all couples that sit in my office for therapy sessions. Such behavior is bad for normal people, imagine what it can do to a person suffering from anxiety. Living like this will throw you off your balance and make your situation even worse. It will bring many fears like the fear of not tending to your partner's needs all the time and disappointing him/her.

Such behavior causes you to become obsessed with what your partner wants and needs and you forget about yourself. This behavior then trickles down to your children when you become obsessed with their needs as well. And you end up living your life for your loved ones and not yourself.

I am guilty of this. There is a point in my marriage when I was so obsessed with my family and it caused me to forget myself. I went clothes shopping and barely bought myself anything because I was more focused on what my children and my husband needed, I never once cooked anything I wanted to eat because I wanted to please my family and make them something they would enjoy.

I was the person in the family with barely anything because I was working to make sure my family had everything. I woke up and went to work everyday to work for them and provide what they needed and wanted and never what I needed or wanted.

This became clear to me when one of my friends told me that she is taking a holiday weekend by herself to meditate and clear her head. The first question that popped was who was going to care for her family when she was gone. She casually said that her husband would do it. What opened my eyes was not the answer but how she answered. The casualness in her voice was my wakeup call.

I had taken on too much in my relationship and it was wearing me down. I did not give myself an opportunity to enjoy my life. I do not mean that I was blaming my family in any way. I love them and would do anything for them. But I needed to live my life too. It is my life and I am obligated to live it. When all is said and done, I do not want to look back and feel like I wasted my time and did nothing for myself.

As I drove home that evening, I reflected on all the plans I had for my life. I had many plans for myself and was nowhere near accomplishing any of them because I became so consumed by my relationship and my family. I let my beautiful family become my distraction.

It was so devastating to see that and I was upset. I started to understand the anxiety I had better. The reason I was not getting better was because I was not taking care of myself. I was so concentrated on being everything for my family that I forgot to be everything for myself.

I sat my husband down and explained everything I felt to him. Thank God he was so understanding and told me that he was there to hold my hand as I started my self-care journey. By going on this journey, I was able to solve a lot of things in my relationship with my husband and my children.

The first thing I noticed was that I did not have a life of my own so I was always up in my family's business. I failed to hear the silent cry from my children and my husband who felt I was crowding them. They needed their space to grow and develop their own lives but I was not making it possible because I was always there.

My children told me that some of the things I was doing for them other moms were not doing. This was a little embarrassing but I was happy they told me that. At least by giving them space they were able to focus on their interests better because I was not there to tell them what to do all the time.

I also realized that my husband hated it when I was always checking what he was doing all the time. He wanted his space to be able to do his thing but I was always there. In my defense, I was trying to be there for everyone in my family like I was for my mom and siblings growing up. But I could do that without crowding them. I needed to go and find my life.

As much as I was in a relationship, I still had my life. It did not end because I got a life partner. I owed it to myself to live my life to the fullest. And I became even happier by doing this. I wanted to be a good wife and mother and self-care helped me with that.

From this journey I realized that I can only be good for my family if I am good with myself. When I am okay and happy, I am able to be okay and happy for my family. I was able to understand when my children and my husband wanted to pursue their own interests because I was doing the same with mine.

This journey taught me that I love yoga and iced tea. They serve it at my gym and it is the highlight of my weekends. I started to meditate more and to pursue my interests. Going away by myself was no longer so scary and I could finally do things I loved. I still had responsibilities in my marriage and parenting life, but I was still fulfilling my responsibilities in my own life.

## EAT HEALTHIER AND BETTER

The whole idea about self-care is to look good and to feel good. Start by what you put into your body. Become intentional with your food. Take care of your body and keep yourself from ailments by making sure your body is getting the necessary nutrients and minerals.

When I was not living for myself, I did not care what I ate. I realized that my family was heavy on junk food. We ate a lot of junk food and I think it was a way of me pleasing my children. I was the mom that did not stress on vegetables and eating healthy. Before I got children, I was very passionate about clean eating but I think trying to please my children got the best of me and made me forget that lifestyle.

Get your life back by giving your body the necessary nutrients and minerals. Go online and research on the best foods that benefit your body. Learn new ways to cook it. I found out from my job as a therapist that many people do not like healthy eating because the healthy food they ate was cooked wrong.

Right now, there are a million and one ways to cook healthy food and make it a finger licking delicacy. Go on the internet and find these ways. You may not perfect the skill in one day so be ready to take the journey. Watch as many YouTube videos as you need to and try cooking as many times as you need until you become perfect.

Trust me that when you start you will not be able to stop. The new journey will give you purpose and happiness and you will not want to let it go. And trust me, your family will adapt to this new lifestyle. My husband carries a packed lunch now and does not eat the junk at his office.



## PERSONAL APPEARANCE CARE

When was the last time you got a haircut or had your hair colored? When did you last go for a massage or get your nails done? You need to do it now and make it a habit. I always have a hair appointment every two weeks on Saturday at 10 AM. I go in for a massage and nice mani-pedi after. And sometimes I bring my husband.

Yes you can enjoy these things with your partner too. Your self-care journey is no secret. Bring your partner with you from time to time and let him/her see what you do. They will pick up tips from this as they learn your interests. My husband has gifted me with spa vouchers many times because he sees how much I love to pamper myself.

Go get a nice haircut and do that style you have been wanting to for so long. It will be fun I promise. I fell in love with taking care of my appearance that my husband has to stop me from buying new shoes because he thinks I have enough.

I am not being selfish; I am taking care of my needs and interests. Now I can buy myself clothes and make sure I look good. My hair, nails and skin are always fresh too. I even found out that I love the whole skincare process and I am always in the mirror applying different things to keep my skin fresh and good.

## EXERCISE

Get your body in good shape. Look good and feel good. I love to take walks in the evening and get my body in motion. Exercising will help you relax your body. You will be able to have calmness because your body will be releasing the tension it has built up from working all day or from any other stress.

Join a gym or if you are not looking for anything strenuous you can do some yoga or walk. I do yoga and walking because it helps me clear my mind and ease the tension. I am happier when my mind is clear and my body is not tense. Before I did not know that exercising would help me calm down in case I am in a bad mood. Right now, my husband passes my yoga mat every time I am in a bad mood.

By doing this I am able to keep in good shape and eliminate conditions like obesity. I am also able to think more about myself because I am working on myself and making sure I am okay. My mind is able to be cleared from everything that is clogging it and I can have clear thoughts. Exercising also helps me to sleep better because my body is relaxed and not tensed.

## MEDITATE

Meditation is the cure for everything I believe. You can reverse any situation in your life by sitting and meditating. Meditation connects you with your inner being and you are able to do many things with your life when you are in this state.

It helped me cure my anxiety. I was able to meditate on what was really causing me fear and problems and I was able to fix it. Meditating helped me to realize my interest and to know what route I wanted my life to take. I was able to channel the inner me and remember all the plans I had for myself.

Meditating helped me love my husband and my children more. I reflect on my life and how far I have come and I am able to see how they have made a great impact in my life.

I recommend that you start meditating. Take time to be by yourself and think about yourself. Think about who you are at the moment and who you want to be. This is your chance to change your mindset and to be whoever you want to be. If you want to be a marathon runner meditating will help you set the right attitude. If you want to start a new company and succeed in it, meditating will help you cultivate a winner's attitude.

## TALK TO SOMEONE

If finding the balance between it all is hard for you it is okay to talk to someone. Find help. Get someone to hold your hand in this journey. It is all going to be okay and asking for help is not showing weakness.

Go for therapy. Having undergone therapy and being a therapist myself I can promise you the many benefits you will enjoy from it. One thing I know is that the answers are always within us. A therapist will help you shape your thinking and your attitude so you can tap into these answers.

You will be talking to someone who is not telling you what to do but is guiding you on how to find out what you want to do. Therapy will calm you and show you that your problems are not unique to you. This is one thing I always tell my clients. Of course I do not disclose other client's information because it is confidential but I always tell them that their situation is not unique to them.

Many people feel like they are the only ones going through what they are and it makes their self-care journey harder. You are not the first person to have lost yourself in your relationship. And there is a solution for it. Talk to someone that will help you see your solution.

## FIND YOUR INTERESTS

Look for what you are passionate about. This will help you find your hobbies. You may even find a new career path like I did. I realized on this journey as we were going through therapy that I would like to help other couples like me to find solutions to their problems and save their union.

You may realize that what you have been doing all your life has not been what you want to do. Maybe that is the reason for all the unhappiness and anxiety. You should find out what makes you happy. Find what makes your heart beat faster and what your heart is set on.

And when you find these things out, pursue them. I have heard people come and tell me how they have an interest in something but do not pursue it. How will you know how good you are at it if you do not pursue it? You need to go out and do it. Find out about it and learn as much as you can. Practice it.

I went back to school to learn how to be a therapist because I wanted to be licensed and to know how to run my practice in the best way. There is also a lot of material online that will help you learn as much as you need to perfect your interest.

You need to do it for you. If it makes you happy then you should.

## PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

When you are no longer living for yourself you are neglecting so many things about you. It may be that you even neglected your own hygiene. There are many times I left the house without taking a shower because I did not have time to get to it. I had to get to something else for someone. Not even for me.

This is not the way to leave. Always have time for yourself and time for your hygiene. Schedule all your tasks around them. They are not optional. Taking a shower is very important. You need to be clean. Wearing clean clothes and using clean appliances is equally important.

Take the time to do your laundry and make sure your clothes are clean. Wash your shoes and your car too. Make sure that everything around you is clean and your hygiene is being observed.

Cleanliness will also help with the anxiety because when you are clean you are organized. And when you are organized, your mind will be able to have clear thoughts. You will also be avoiding many illnesses like a cold or flu that come with bad hygiene.

## GO ON PERSONAL DATES

Take yourself on a date. It does not have to be planned. Just decide to go out to a fancy place or anywhere you like when you feel you need it. Take this time to experience things for yourself.

There is nothing like experiencing something with your partner. Both of you share a memory from it. But it is equally good to experience different things for yourself. You will not always be with your partner to go and do something together. And you do not always have to wait for your partner so you can experience these things.

Go by yourself and have a date by yourself. You will not be lonely. When you are there, find something to make you feel happy and excited. Something that will make your stay on your date enjoyable.

## FIND THE BALANCE

As much as experiencing things by yourself and finding yourself is important, please do not forget your partner. Find the balance. Look for a way you can be able to pursue your self-care and still be the best partner you can be in your relationship.

Do not let your self-care journey make you selfish towards your partner. This journey is supposed to make you a better person so you can also be a better partner. Once in a while let your partner follow you in one of your escapades to see what makes you happy. And make sure to follow your partner too when he/she has invited you to see an interest he/she has.

Take your self-care journey seriously so you can find yourself and become a better person. Use it to let go of all unnecessary tensions and heaviness in your heart. Allow your self-care journey to heal you.





## SHOW YOUR PARTNER YOU ARE THERE FOR THEM TOO

When you are in a relationship you become your partner's support system. Your partner should be able to depend on you at any time for both your emotional and physical support. The problem that comes with this responsibility is not knowing when your support is needed or how to give support.

Many times in a relationship one party may always be the dependent one and not know how to give his/her partner support. This is a normal but dangerous occurrence. It leads to your partner feeling unloved and unwanted. Your partner will end up drained because he/she is always giving but rarely receives.

This does not always come out to the open all the time. You may never notice that your partner is feeling drained unless you lookout for signs. If you are just used to depending on him/her and have never put yourself in a position where you can be depended on then your partner may or may not be suffering silently.

Do not allow your partner to feel alone. There are two of you in that relationship for a reason. You are both supposed to be each other's support system and anchor. A partner is someone that loves so much and you know that you can count on him/her at any time.

If I cannot count on my husband for anything in my life then I will start to have insecurities. My husband is my personal person and I am his. I should be able to count on him at any time and get the support I need. He should also have the peace of knowing that I will be there for him at any time. Unless both of us work on being supportive partners then we will open a can of worms of insecurities in our lives.

If I cannot count on my husband then I will feel like there is a disconnect. There is something that is keeping him from being there to support him. And then the anxiety kicks in. Does he still love me? Is he

cheating on me? Has he become so busy and oblivious to my needs? And trust me, I am sure that when I am also not offering support he is thinking the same.

Your partner may be facing a low moment or going through a dark face and you are oblivious to it. Unless you train yourself to be a good support system then you will be hanging him/her out to dry. You are exposing your partner to more emotional damage because he/she is emotionally lonely.

My husband tells me that when he does not feel my support he feels alone. Even if I did not know what was happening and he has the support of other people he feels that it is not enough. Unless I expressly provide mine, he will not be okay.

For him, I am the person in his life that knows him deeply and personally. When I offer my support, he is confident that he will make it out stronger and better. Because my support comes from a person that knows his capabilities. It is a way of me cheering him on and showing my confidence in his skills.

Your support means more to your partner than anyone else's support means to him/her. Stop with the attitude of he has enough people helping him/her. Even as a girlfriend or boyfriend you hold a lot of emotional weight on your partner. I have seen my son go through a dark face when he broke his leg and could not play for the school team. My son loves to play soccer and he is really good at it.

As a family, we were always there for him. His biggest fear was that he would not be able to play again. Every day we would sit with him and assure him that everything was going to be okay. His spirits were still low and he seemed like he did not believe us. Even his friends and teammates would come and visit and assure him that he would be out on the field in no time. But he was still not happy.

When his girlfriend finally got back from the trip she had gone to, she had to cut it short and come see her partner as soon as she could, I could tell

the difference in my son's mood and spirits. He was immediately uplifted. I was there when she said to him that everything was going to be okay. And my son's face immediately brightened. He let go of all his worry.

Those words his girlfriend told him were the same things we had been saying to him ever since the accident happened. But they sounded better when they came from his partner. I could see that his progress and healing was even faster when she came back. He was no longer downcast but he was confident that everything was going to be okay. That is the power of support from your partner. It makes you believe in yourself and feel that the load you are carrying is not as heavy after all.

A partner's support is a source of security and love. It is a soft cushion that you can lean on and feel safe. There are no insecurities when you have this kind of support. I know because I usually get some kind of confidence when my husband supports me. I feel that I cannot mess up and what I am doing is the right thing. The support keeps me in check and makes sure that I pursue my dreams and goals.

At least you know that someone that loves and cares for you is out there rooting for you. Someone is watching to see you come out stronger than before. And the best thing is you cannot doubt the loyalty of your partner. He/she truly wants to see you happy and successful.

## DO NOT PLACE TOO MANY EXPECTATIONS ON YOUR PARTNER

Do not set unachievable expectations for your partner and get disappointed when he/she cannot deliver. We tend to do this when we expect a lot from our partners and do not give them an opportunity to do what he/she is capable of.

From my experience as a therapist, I know that these expectations come from comparisons. When you start comparing your relationship with another and set standards for your partner to meet.

First you are causing your partner stress by expecting more than he/she can offer. And when results are not delivered you take it as a sign of no love and you end up making your partner feel like he/she is incompetent.

It is normal to have expectations but do not overdo it and cause unnecessary pressure for your partner. Doing this is making your partner feel like he/she does not have your support. For a relationship to last and to flourish both of you need to have an understanding of each other. If you do not know exactly what your partner can offer you comfortably then you will be causing him/her pressure.

It is okay to dream. It is okay to have goals for where you want your relationship to be. But do not apply undue pressure. Show your support. Show your partner that you are cheering him/her on and one day you will accomplish your goals.

Both of you should expect from each other what you know is possible at the moment and support each other to it. And when one of you gets to a dark point then as a partner you should actively be involved in showing your support.

## KNOW YOUR PARTNER

Watch out for what shows you that your partner is facing a hard time. This is going to be made possible if you know him/her well. I know my husband like I know the back of my hand if not better. I know the words he uses when he is upset, angry, or is having a hard time. I am also able to sense if he just wants to be left alone or he wants to be helped.

Knowing your partner will also help you know the kind of support he/she needs. My husband likes it when I recognize that he is going through something even if he will deny it when I mention it to him. Of course he only denies it the first time then comes back later to tell me what is happening.

Immediately you notice that your partner is going through something you should go into support mode. It does not matter whether you are doing this actively or passively. Sometimes your partner may not want you to crowd him/her and just needs time to think. Or maybe you do not know what support to give. Just make sure that he/she knows that you are there for them.

Your partner will appreciate that you have noticed what is happening and have changed your life routine to ensure you offer him/her your full support. Many couples I have spoken to tell me that they appreciate it when their partner is willing to offer support even when he/she has not been asked to.

It is okay not to notice when your partner needs your help. Sometimes the signs are not as clear or many things may be happening at once that blind you from seeing it. Do not beat yourself up because you did not notice it.

## LISTEN TO YOUR PARTNER

The more you listen, the better you know how to offer your support. What your partner is telling you is very important. You will be able to know what exactly upset him/her and how you can be of help in that situation. Sometimes listening will help you know your partner's plans and you can be able to see where you can come in and help.

Do not discredit anything your partner is telling you. I used to have this habit when my husband told me something I did not accept or did not like. During therapy, I learned that my interests and his will sometimes be different. Being married did not mean that we were obligated to have the same interests. So there were going to be things about him that were not in my line of interests. But that did not mean that I could not offer my support.

My husband needed my support regardless of whether I was interested in what he was doing or not. I should be able to put myself in a position where I can offer him the support he needs at any time. Discrediting him will only create a rift and bring about many problems.

I encourage couples to talk to each other and bond. It is a way of getting to know your partner. Do not assume that because you are together you know them. I learn something new from my husband of more than two decades every day from the talks we have. And I am able to know how to be a supportive partner from this. I get to understand more about him and how to handle situations better. And he does the same for me.

## YOU MUST NOT HAVE THE SOLUTION

There is a pressure that partners in a relationship feel of having the solution to all the relationship's problems and all problems faced by the partner. You do NOT need to have the solution to any problem. Giving your support is enough. Do not feel pressured and feel unreliable and inadequate because you do not have the solutions.

Being there for your partner and offering your support is enough. Your support is going to make your partner calm down and he can find a solution or you can help him/her find one.

Your partner will lower your partner's stress levels. And when the stress is reduced, he/she can think rationally and come up with a solution to the situation. Showing your support will help you and your partner unlock new levels of intimacy. Both of you will be able to bond in this situation and strengthen your bond even more.

By supporting your partner, you are lowering his/her stress levels and opening up a door to a more open and positive life. Your partner will be able to know that he/she is not going through the low moment alone. A new level of confidence and positivity will be born and your partner will face the odds knowing that he/she will succeed.

Your support is telling your partner that you have faith in him/her. You are showing your partner that you believe in the skills that he/she has and you will be there to walk the process. Many people, even those in relationships, feel alone when they are facing a low situation. They feel like people do not see them or hear them.

As a therapist, I can attest to the theory that all solutions are within us. It is true. And to get them out you need to have a good support system. Some people are fortunate to be able to be their own support system. But you do



not have to carry this load alone when you are in a relationship. Lean on your partner.

## CELEBRATE YOUR PARTNER'S WINS

One thing that encourages my husband to keep achieving new things is the fact that I always pop a bottle of champagne or open a bottle of nice red wine. And we celebrate the win. It does not matter how small it is. I believe that small wins are the pathway to bigger accomplishments.

He is motivated to do more and be more so there is more to celebrate. The smile on his face is usually a “full-face smile” when he sees me appreciate the good things he has done. My actions show him that I am invested in what he is doing with his life. I offer him my support in everything to show him that I believe in him and I know that better things are still yet to come.

Sometimes he complains that I am overreacting and the achievement is so small. But this is my way of showing support for what he does. I see him gain new confidence and he goes for even bigger things.

Learn to celebrate your partner in everything. Do not let him/her have an achievement and it goes uncelebrated. Showing your support does not have to be for low days only. You should show your support all the time. It is just that your partner needs more attention when he/she is going through a hard time.

Take advantage of every opportunity to show support. Jump on it and ride it as high as you can. This is a way of showing and proving your love. Showing support is proven to reduce insecurities and anxiety in a relationship because it truly shows that you love your partner and are there for them no matter what.

## ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP

Learn from your partner how he/she wants to be supported during a certain situation. There are times you have to ask because the role you have to play may not be clear. Ask your partner and let him/her tell you what you can do to help.

This has helped me to be more for my husband in situations I did not know how to be there for him. One of these times was when his mother died. We were both disappointed and distraught. I loved his mom so much and I love her to date. She was so much to me in the years we knew each other and she was a lot to my family.

When she passed away, I was also grieving. But I knew that my husband was hurting more and worse. I needed to be there for him because he had lost the parent that brought him into the world. He and his mom were really close and I had to support him during this time.

But because I was grieving too, I did not know how to offer my support. So I asked him how he wanted me to help him. And he told me that he wanted space for a few days then he would like me to start reminding him of fond memories we all shared together. This information helped me help him during this grieving period. It also helped me because I was not overburdening myself with pressure of not knowing how to help him.

Asking does not mean you do not know how to offer support. It just means that you want to know how to help better. You want your help to be effective. So you are going to the person receiving it for advice on how to do it best.

## YOU ARE NOT A PUNCHING BAG

As much as you are offering your partner your support you should not be the punching bag. Do not be the one that is beaten down and blamed for everything. Giving support is not supposed to drain you. It is not supposed to make you feel worse or bad about yourself.

Your partner is facing something but it does not mean that you should be at the receiving end of his harsh treatment. Do not allow yourself to be abused and drained of your energy. You are there to offer support and not to be kicked down.

This is toxic behavior and your partner needs serious help. Recommend that he/she sees a therapist and has the anger situation dealt with. Giving your support is a sacrifice but it is not a burden. Do not carry a load in the name of trying to help your partner face what he/she is facing.

Your support goes a long way in making your partner sane. It may not fix the situation but it will bring peace. Always be available to show support at all times. It is not a burden, you should actually enjoy doing it because your partner's success is your success.



## SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH YOUR PARTNER

**F**or a relationship to work, there must be communication. Both parties should be willing to come together and openly express their feelings and thoughts to each other. This is made possible when you work past the fear and tell your partner what it is you are feeling. Let your partner know exactly what is going on in your world.

People with anxiety find it hard to open up about their thoughts and feelings. They do this to kind of protect themselves from rejection and backlash that they are convinced they will receive when they open up. Silence is not the solution. Especially when you are in a relationship.

As long as you love your partner and they love you too I am positive he/she wants to hear what is going on with you. Sometimes it is hard to fully understand your feelings and put them into words. This makes many people start to filter out information, lie, or even hide some information. There is no need to hide who you are from your partner.

I know that the need to hide also comes from not wanting your partner to reject you. There was a time in my life when I had faced a lot of hardship and I thought that my life had been ugly. It was hard letting my husband, who was my boyfriend then, into my life to see me for who I was.

First I would think about how he was from a well off family and he had both his parents. Coming from a single-parent home where I was forced to mature really fast so I can take care of my siblings I just did not think he would understand. The last thing I wanted was for him to see me as weird.

I loved my husband so much back then like I do now. I did not want to lose him and I also did not want to show him who I was. It was hard hiding my life away because I worked three jobs and still went to school. Most times I could not make it for dates because I had to pick up an extra shift to make money.

My mother and my siblings depended on each coin we could lay our hands on. I was also scared that he would think I was below his standards because my mother worked on her businesses and was still a maid. As I said, we needed to get that money in. At some point in my life, I never thought that life was ever going to get better.

My previous boyfriend had left me and called me poor. He always felt like he was doing me a favor by staying with me. This hurt me a lot and made me more closed up. It was hard on our relationship back then. And in my mind, I thought it was going to get easier because we were young so communication did not mean anything.

This is the wrong thought to have. Communication is very important at any stage of a relationship. The culture and foundation you set for your relationship will determine how you will live in it. If you start with a culture of secrecy then your life will be all about secrets. Both of you will always have the urge to hide information from each other. This is going to hurt you and your relationship.

When there is no communication then information is not being passed. When my husband and I were still dating I would get really mad when he opened up to any of his friends and not me. I was still having a problem opening up to him but I was upset when he returned the same energy to me. My thoughts were that if he could not talk to me then who was he talking to?

I am the one that is entitled to hear everything about him. How else am I supposed to know him if he does not talk to me? I could not take what I was dishing out. It is then that I decided to start opening up to him. This took a lot of courage and strength from me.

I just decided to go out with it. We met for lunch and I started to cry as I explained everything. Of course he knew that I must have been struggling financially because I always insisted that we meet at cheap places for dates because I wanted to be able to afford the food. I also did not have the

classiest clothes. Most times I felt like the word poor was written on my forehead and everyone I came across could see who I was.

I cried as I told him about myself. This was a long-overdue introduction. It should have happened shortly or even before we started dating. But when it did, I felt lighter. Yes, I still had my problems, but now I felt lighter because I had gotten it out of my system.

He was so understanding and vowed to help me in whatever way he could. At that moment I thought that he was just saying that because he was obligated to as my boyfriend. I told him that I was not complaining about my situation because that was life for me as I knew it.

But to my surprise, he really did help me. My husband spoke about my situation to his parents and his mom offered to help. Now you know why I had such a liking for her. She was very accommodating. My husband's mom helped me secure a job at a company that was paying me double what I was earning from all the three jobs combined. She was also able to secure a secretary job for my mom.

Life changed for me because I opened up to my partner. Do not expect that your partner will have a solution to your problems. But talking to them will lighten the load and both of you can work out a solution. It is better to work out a solution with your partner than alone besides, two competent heads will always be better than one.

He has supported me through and through. Right now, there is nothing I cannot tell him because he is my best friend. He even senses when I have something going on. That is how close we are. Our communication is intact.



## GOOD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

One thing we have to do in our lives is to protect our health at all costs. Talking to your partner about your feelings will help you protect your mental health. Your mental health is very important. It is what carries everything in your life.

If your mental health is not healthy then you will start to suffer physically too. When I was hiding things from my husband and any time, I hide something from him, I feel a heaviness in my heart. It feels more like I am tired and being weighed down.

When I hid my life from him when we were dating, I would feel like something heavy was weighing down my shoulders. I used to experience stiff necks, shoulder pains, and migraines. All from refusing to open up.

Within a short time, I started to get depressed. I was already depressed from all the horrors I faced growing up. And from this I developed anxiety. I was constantly in fear of what tomorrow would be. It was hard and unfortunate. I did not know if life was going to get better or worse.

Hiding these things from my partner only made the situation worse. It made me feel worse than I did especially since I knew that I had an obligation to fill him in on everything about me.

Your partner will give you his/her support. There is no need to make yourself suffer unnecessarily. Let go of all of it. Call your partner, sit him/her down, and start to explain everything. Why do you have a life partner if he/she is not allowed to know you?

## PRACTICE

If communication does not come easy for you and you do not know what you are going to say you can always practice. Stand in front of a mirror and practice what you are going to say to your partner.

You can have a small notebook where you write what you have to say. If speaking the words is hard you can start with a text or letter. Build the conversation from there. After the letter or the text your partner will surely approach you and both of you will talk it out.

You can also practice with your friend or someone that already knows your situation. There is no harm in this. Words do not come easily to everyone. I know because I struggle sometimes. As much as my husband is my best friend and I can tell him everything, some topics are still a little touchy for me and I have to prepare myself before I can approach him.

The practice is not to make your “speech” perfect. This is not a rehearsal for a play or a movie. The reason you are practicing is to show yourself that you can actually talk about what you are going through and not break apart. You will see the words come out of your mouth and you will gain confidence. These words are coming from within you. There is no need to fear.

## DIFFERENTIATE YOUR FEELINGS FROM YOUR THOUGHTS

When you are opening up you want to be able to clearly define your thoughts. Your thoughts are what is actually happening and your feelings are emotions. It is good to communicate both but knowing the distinction is very important.

Knowing the difference will help you tell your partner exactly what happened and how you felt from the things that transpired. Or you will risk sharing your feelings only. I usually feel like this is telling the half-truth. Sometimes I am angered by things that happened yet my anger is not warranted. When I explain the thoughts, I am able to fully describe what happened. And then I can go ahead to validate my feelings.

Only describing your feelings can easily take you to a world of imagination. This is where you are imagining what is happening to you when it is not. Then you are having feelings around these imaginations and you end up acting on these feelings.

Teach yourself that what you think is different from what you feel. One influences the other but it is not the same thing. When you are communicating with your partner it is only fair that they know the truth of what happened.

## SHARE YOUR DEEP AND INNER THOUGHTS

Stop hiding or withholding some of the information. All of it is relevant. Tell your partner all about it. There is no reason to give a half-truth. Let your partner in on everything that happened or everything that is happening.

The importance of this is if you teach yourself how to withhold information then you will slowly go back to not communicating at all. Or you will be one of those people that willfully omit the important information.

I have spoken to couples with communication issues and I know the magnitude of not sharing the whole information. For most of them, one of the parties just tells the partner what is safe to tell. The partner then goes out thinking that he/she has all the information only to learn about something more later.

What happens from this is your partner will feel lied to and cheated. He/she will feel like the information you shared was all a lie and is in no way the truth. There is a way the information you withheld will become the only truth in his/her eyes and trust will be lost.

Get past your fear and share everything as it is. Let your partner be the one to decide how he/she will feel. Most times you may be withholding information because you think that is what is safe but it is not.

## ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE VULNERABLE

Let yourself be vulnerable. Communicate with your partner and tell him/her exactly what is going on in your life. This is not a weakness. Being raw and open with your partner about your thoughts and feelings is not a weakness. And how can it be? All you want to achieve is your partner getting to know you better.

Stop fearing that you will receive backlash or rejection. This fear is just in your head. Opening up will only increase your bond with your partner. He/she will feel that you have let them into a secret. One that no one else knows so they hold important information.

Your bond is strengthened because you both know each other very well. There are no surprises when it comes to the two of you.

I know I usually look forward to coming home every evening so my husband and I can talk. It is usually the highlight of my day, especially if some major events happened to me during the day. I am usually vulnerable and explain everything including my feelings as they are.

The smile on my husband's face when he sees my excitement when I tell him these things is priceless. He loves to listen to me go on and on about my day. I am a storyteller and I love to talk. It is hard sometimes to open up about some things but it is made easier when I know that I will face no rejection.

## LISTEN TO YOUR PARTNER'S INPUT

Appreciate what your partner has to say about the things you are telling him/her. There is this habit we have as humans of jumping to defend ourselves immediately someone does not have the same views we do.

Learn to listen. Take time and consider what he/she has to say. Think about it for some time and consider his/her reasons for saying it. Sometimes we are usually so fixated on one way of thinking that we end up not considering a different approach of looking at a situation.

What your partner has to say can be the other side you did not think about. When you listen you will know about it. You shared your thoughts for a reason, so listen to what your partner has to say about it. After listening you can calmly have a conversation about it.

## VOICE OUT YOUR THOUGHTS

It is unfair to expect your partner to guess what is happening to you. He/she is no angel or supernatural being to look at you and know what happened. You need to communicate your thoughts and to make a habit of it.

There are instances your partner may notice different things happening to you. But this does not mean that he/she should know the facts too. Tell your partner what is putting you in the mood he/she has noticed you have.

Another habit I see a lot during counseling is when your partner does something to upset you and you stay silent and expect him/her to know that you are upset. Sometimes they will. And other times your partner will go about his/her business normally and know that you have been hurt.

Make a habit of communicating these feelings and to avoid unnecessary hurt.

## HAVE TRUST IN YOUR PARTNER

It is only when you fully trust your partner that you will be able to openly communicate with him/her. Unless there is trust you will constantly fear what your partner will do with the information you are sharing with him/her.

Build trust. Start by letting your partner into your life gradually until you trust him/her fully to share more with them.

Having trust issues is okay. You may have experienced a lot of rejection and backlash before. But staying in this is wrong. Make sure you heal from these things before you commit yourself to a new relationship.

Trust builds love because you know that your partner is always working for your good and the good of your relationship. When you learn to trust you will also have peace. There will be no insecurities and anxieties caused by uncertainties.

I always tell my clients that where there is trust you will even be comfortable now knowing what your partner is doing all the time. You know that he/she will come and tell you and that your partner never does anything to undermine your relationship.



## GET HELP

If opening up does not come easily, you can opt to go see a therapist. From therapy, you will be able to unlock the deeper reasons why you have communication issues. As I have mentioned in previous chapters, the solution to every situation we face lies within us.

Therapy helps you tap into these solutions. Also at therapy you will get useful tips and advice that you will use in your relationship to make it better. Therapy will help you deal with the dysfunction and it is effective because the solution is coming from you.

If the pressure to open up is too much but you do not know how to, I suggest that you seriously consider therapy. You can go with your partner. I am sure that he/she is willing to support you.

Communicating your thoughts and feelings to your partner may seem easy but if you do not make it a habit it will become hard. There are many times that you will feel like some information should not be shared. I understand that some information is private, for example, a secret a friend told you. As long as it does not concern your relationship you are not obligated to say it. But if it is then you are.

Let your partner know you. Build a relationship where there are no secrets between you. A relationship based on love and trust.



## GIVE YOUR PARTNER THEIR FREEDOM

There is a false notion in relationships that makes people believe that controlling your partner and knowing his/her every move is love. This is false. You will end up with a toxic relationship filled with many insecurities and problems if you decide to live like this.

Your partner is not your prisoner. You do not determine what he/she does and how it is going to be done. This is where most people lose it in relationships. I suffered this when I tried to control my husband when we started dating. Mostly it was because I was used to being the one in charge at home. My mother was mostly away working and I had to take care of my siblings. We could not afford a nanny and we did not have other people in the home to come and care for us. This responsibility fell on my shoulders at a very young age.

When my husband and I started dating I brought in my controlling quality into the relationship. I believed at this time in my life that all my ways were right and people in my life needed to do as I said if they wanted things to go well for them. So far it has worked because this quality gave me some leadership skills that my employers loved and I always found myself being entrusted with more responsibilities at my workplace.

The thing is I did not know that a relationship is not to be micromanaged like a job. Actually this is another thing that became clear during therapy with my husband. I was so controlling for him and he brought it up during one of the sessions. He told the therapist that my controlling nature was so prevalent when we were dating but after we got married and started having children, I had loosened up a little.

He described it like I had found someone else to control so I was not putting in as much attention to him as I was doing before. Looking back, that is when I saw that I came into the relationship with this habit ever since we started dating. My husband explained that when we were dating, in the

first few months, my behavior was tolerable. It made him feel like I cared so he was not so bothered about it.

But then he says that I became unbearable. I got to a point where I wanted to know what he and his friends discussed and why he decided to do something. I always wanted to know where he was and what he was planning to do about everything in his life.

Somewhere in my subconscious world, everyone around me did not have sense to think for themselves and make their own decisions. I actually felt that if I did not step up then many people in my life would suffer. They would make the wrong choices and end up in deep trouble.

My husband endured this because he understood the genesis of my behavior. He suffered in silence for all those years and sometimes I feel guilty that I did not notice it all that time. But I had started to become too much for him. My behavior brought in problems in our relationship. He wanted to be set free and be able to do things his way without me feeling disrespected.

Our therapist guided us through the importance of space. He told us that being in a relationship does not mean that we now have to micromanage our partners. Something he said opened up my eyes to the whole thing. He said that in a relationship, both partners have their own lives and being together does not mean they should forfeit them.

This was eye-opening for me. I never in a long time thought that my husband had his own life. From the moment I accepted to be his girlfriend and later his wife our lives became one. I did not understand that he still had his life that he was living. He still had that life where he was expected to make decisions that would benefit his life. It did not mean that he was going to do something to jeopardize our relationship.

But he still had to do things that were going to be good for him. Things that would make him happy and bring him joy and growth. As his partner, I was supposed to understand this. I am supposed to be his support system

and his cheerleader. I am not supposed to be the one telling him how he will do what he wants to do or tell him what he should do.

I can only advise him when he comes to me for help. Partners in a relationship can only control what happens in the relationship. Beyond that, you have no control. You will only hurt yourself when you try to go in and control that part of your partner's life. I was in a lot of pain because my actions made me insecure. The first thing that came into my mind when I learned something my husband did was I felt betrayed.

I have mentioned in previous chapters that I do not like to hear things about my husband from other people. This is one of my pet peeves. But I do not control what he does. I allow him to do his thing then later when we are talking, he can tell me what he has been up to. Or he can come and talk to me about his plans. I do my best to make sure I am not controlling anything he does. And where I feel like he is making a mistake or he can do something else to get better results I make sure that I lay my opinion in a neutral way that gives him the option of following it or not.

These days it does not hurt me when he does not take my advice. As long as it does not affect our relationship, I am okay. I learned to separate my emotions from his life, that is, his life that does not concern our relationship, for instance, his career or his social life. I had become controlling to a point where I would tell him which friends to hang out with yet it was none of my business.

You and your partner need to give yourselves the freedom you deserve. Respect each other's individual life and do not try to meddle in them. Give your partner his/her space to think and come up with their own decisions. You will be surprised how much of a competent person your partner is. He/she is also working for the good of the relationship.

In counseling, I have seen so many couples where one of them is convinced that he/she is the only competent party. They feel that if matters were left in the hands of their partner's then the relationship will crumble

and fall. Nothing could be more wrong. Actually, if you decide to take this toxic approach and take control this way, anxiety and insecurities will never leave your relationship.

You will feel like the only way both of you will have peace is if your partner agrees to be micromanaged by you. And this will only bring more hurt because this system will only work for a short time and after your partner will rebel. You will also be giving yourself the extra work of checking to make sure that your partner is following the rules you have set and every small irregularity will throw you off.

The best way to have a relationship is to let your partner be free to do what he/she wants as long as it does not affect your relationship. I feel that this brings in the good mystery into the relationship. Both of you will always be confident that your partner is doing good things and you will both have something to talk about. There will be nothing to talk about if you always want to know what is happening all the time.

I have mentioned that I learn something new about my husband every time and we have been together for a long time. This is because I get to hear about the things he is doing with his life and he gets to hear about mine. We are not strangers. We are in fact best friends. Both of us just do not breathe down each other's necks.

Being together does not give you the right to dictate your partner's life. You are not entitled to tell your partner what to and not to do. By giving your partner freedom you are building trust and letting go of the insecurities. You are letting go of the control and deciding to give your partner confidence that he/she is never going to betray you.

This will give you peace of mind. Not one day will you sit to start analyzing situations and jump into crazy conclusions of things that did not happen. You will be free from that bondage.

## THE AUTHENTIC QUALITY OF LOVE

In a relationship, love is authentic when you give your partner his/her individuality. When you allow your partner to live as the person that he/she is. This allows your partner to keep in touch with his/her dreams and goals. Being together will not mean that he/she can no longer pursue something that was a dream.

Always aim to respect your partner's individuality. Erase from your mind the false notion that you always need to control your partner for there to be peace and love among you. There is more peace and love when you let go and give them your trust.

Learn to come into their individuality when you are asked to like when your partner asks for advice. If he tells you something that you are not comfortable with then approach the situation calmly and lay down your thoughts rationally. Do not say things like, "I do not want you to..." rather come at him/her with what you feel. Tell your partner what is upsetting you and give him/her the chance to decide whether to use your advice or to take in your concerns.

Trust me when I say that he/she will. As long as you approach the situation well your partner will have no reason to dismiss you. Your approach will be appreciated, he/she will be happy that you took the respect road and approached him/her with kindness. And for sure your partner will make amends to make sure you are kept safe and happy.

## DO NOT THINK THAT YOU AND YOUR PARTNER ARE THE SAME

Stop assuming that because you are together both you and your partner are the same person. You are not. Most times opposites attract. People tend to forget that their partners were also living their own lives before they met. Everyone has his/her own dreams, plans, and goals.

As much as you are in a relationship, these things do not change. What may change is your execution plan because you want everything to uphold your relationship but your partner still desires to get what he/she has been dreaming and planning for.

Taking this away from them and thinking that he/she will join your plans and dreams is wrong. Yes, you can both have projects that you do together. I see couples that build things for themselves together and they flourish. But this does not in any way mean that your partner should forsake his/her individuality and be fully committed to living on your terms.

This will take away the love and trust from your relationship. Both of you will be suffocating each other and you will not be able to move forward. This is also what makes people forget themselves in a relationship. You forget who you were and your life at some point will have no meaning anymore.

You and your partner can be different in your individuality but united in your love. It is very possible. Change your mindset and start embracing the fact that your relationship will still flourish despite the fact that you are no longer in control. Your partner loves you and both of you are building something good together. But allow him/her to retain the individuality of his/her life.



## SET LIMITS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Both of you can sit and expressly set the limits in your relationship. Have clear cut boundaries of what your partner can do that is an extreme and will hurt the relationship. Do not assume that these things come naturally. They do not.

You need to tell your partner what he/she can do that will hurt you and let him/her tell you the same. This conversation needs to be had once in a while. Do not keep repeating these things every time. That is another way of trying to take control. Trust me that when you tell your partner once, he/she will hear you and understand.

There is no need to scout and see whether he/she is following the rules. These are not rules. It does not mean that now your partner has to start walking around lightly because you said something can upset you. He/she is rational and competent enough to understand and plan on what to do and to make sure it does not hurt you.

The idea is to let your partner's individuality flourish by giving him/her freedom. You are allowed to set limits as to how far this freedom goes. Both of you are adults, so you should be expected to hold up your end of the deal. Keep each other in mind as you do this.

In as much as you are giving freedom, it is okay not to be fine or not to tolerate some behaviors. Talk about it with your partner. If it is something that defines his/her personality then this is where maturity and competency of being an adult comes in. Both of you should be able to analyze the situation and come to an agreement that will uphold your individualities and your relationship.

## A TWO-WAY TRAFFIC

Both of you need and should uphold each other's freedom. One partner cannot expect the other to give him/her freedom and does not do the same for the other. It is very important that both of you respect each other and uphold your freedoms.

It is toxic behavior to want to control your partner but to expect them to respect your personality. This is treating your partner as your prisoner and a prisoner to the relationship. Insecurities and anxiety will be borne of this.

When you are controlling your partner, you are actually working against the relationship. Both of you are constantly going to be in problems because every time you will feel disrespected and unappreciated.

Freedom and respect is a two-way traffic. Show your partner how you want to be treated by treating them that way and he/she will learn from you and treat you better as you want. Learn from your partner too. The solutions are always with us. Both of you just need to be open to them and agree to work together for the good of you both.

If you are afraid of your partner's individuality then you are insecure. All that will be going through your mind is that your partner is betraying you and your union. Insecurities have a way of making you imagine what is not there. It will make you go to unnecessary heights to prove your imaginations and in the process, you will do a lot of harm to your union.

When I was controlling I used to go through my husband's phone or show up where he told me the way to verify for myself. Some people in counseling tell me how they follow their husband's or even hire private detectives. Listening to these kinds of stories makes me pity them because they are taking on a burden that is too much to bear.

I show them how they can be peaceful by just trusting their partners. Your partner loves you and is working for your good. Mistakes committed

should not make you decide to go into full-time controlling. It is unfortunate that the mistake happened. But that is life; human is to error.

Both of you should work on your forgiving and healing so you can uphold the trust and love in the relationship and keep out anxiety and insecurities. Deciding to control your partner based on a mistake he/she made will make you grow the mistrust among you. Your forgiveness will never be genuine and you will always feel like you are being lied to and betrayed.

Be free from this. And if all ends fail to get help. Talk to couples that you know who have been able to work past these problems. I always emphasize on the need to get a rational voice to give you advice. You risk being fed with more toxicity and worsening your situation.

You can also go to therapy. Therapists have studied and mastered the art of helping people work through their issues. Go to one and have him/her help you move from your problems and get better. But therapy is something both of you should consent to before you embark on that journey. Your partner has to be comfortable with going for therapy before you go. Or else he/she will feel dragged into something that he/she did not want.

The notion that you need to control your partner because you are in a relationship is false. Both of you can be invested in each other's lives but should always uphold each other's individuality. Be your partner's support system. That is as far as you go into his/her individuality. Give advice when you are asked for it and do not meddle.

Make your relationship sacred by allowing it to flourish with love and trust. And do not allow external influences to make you feel like you should be in control. You are the one that knows your partner and it is you that understands him/her.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. SO DOES  
COMMUNICATION

*H*ow free is your communication with your partner? How often do the both of you pass information to each other freely and willingly? I have seen many marriages and relationships break down because of the lack of communication. Both parties are so right for each other but they fail to pass information to each other well. This usually leads to a lot of problems for them and they eventually fall off their train and break up.

I have seen people in relationships beating themselves up and torturing themselves trying to find information about their partner by investigating instead of asking. They decide to be detectives and to try and find the information for themselves instead of approaching their partner and asking for the information they want.

Most times they end up in a broken relationship. Or they have to go through a lot of damage control and therapy to heal from all the harm that has been done. Your partner is in a relationship with you. This means that you can approach him/her at any time and ask for the information you seek. It is as easy as that.

Do not see your husband with another lady and go all in to investigate him to discover who the girl is. One client of mine told me that she did that with her husband only to find out that the lady was her husband's cousin. She had been living in Europe for a very long time and had just come back. The lady was very embarrassed about her actions and it took a lot for her husband to forgive her.

Imagine how the whole situation would have been different had she approached her husband and inquired about the lady? Probably her husband forgot to mention it. There is a lot that happens in a person's day and it is

justifiable if someone genuinely forgets to mention something. As long as you get the information you want when you ask then you are fine.

Many people in relationships feel like their partner hides something from them when he/she does not mention it. If you also cannot ask then you too have a problem. Approaching your partner should not be a hard task. It should not be the last resort after all damage has been done. Both of you can discuss it at any time that is convenient for you. As adults, you should be able to hold a mature conversation where both of you communicate.

Instead of you worrying yourself and jumping into conclusions just go to the source and get the information you need. How you approach your partner also plays a big role in how you will communicate. If you are disrespectful and go up to your partner with all manner of accusations then do not expect a fruitful conversation. You may not get anything.

Your partner deserves the same respect you do. Even if you are angry and the information you got has upset you, first calm down and approach with respect. I think the movies we all watch today deceive us into thinking that lashing out is okay. Lashing out is not okay. It is dehumanizing and disrespectful because you end up saying a lot of hurtful things to your partner. Things that are not fair and hurt a lot.

You risk causing more problems when you lash out. All those things you want to say about how you have been hurt can be said when you are calm and collected. You do not have to lash out. The validity of your argument will not be realized when you lash out. And you risk starting a screaming battle with your partner who may become defensive and decide to defend him/herself.

Communication in a relationship brings about a bond. It is possible to be talking to your partner every day and all the time but both of you are not communicating. The deep information about the two of you is not being passed. You are holding it back and keeping it from your partner because you do not want them to know.

I have heard a lot of excuses about why people do not communicate in their relationships. As a relationship therapist, I can sum it all into one, you do not want your partner to know. That's it. Stop trying to lie to yourself that you are quiet because you do not know how your partner will take the news. These are excuses. If you really wanted them to know you would have told them.

Go to your partner and tell him/her that this is what happened. Be raw with your partner and be vulnerable. Vulnerability is not a weakness. I have repeated this several times in the book. It is showing that you actually want to be seen and to be known. Or there is no reason to be together and to build something together yet you are total strangers.

Misunderstandings are born of a lack of communication. Insecurities and anxiety feed off these kinds of behaviors. You will always feel betrayed and that your partner is always hiding something. Trust will be lost and the relationship will start to crumble.

All these things can be made better if both you and your partner have a system where you can both approach each other and ask anything. You should also make sure to answer with the truth and omit nothing. Omission does not mitigate the fact that you did not communicate. It is still wrong.

There should also be a system where you do not have to wait to be approached. Tell your partner what you think is important for him/her to know. I feel good when my husband communicates something before I have to ask. It feels good because I feel trusted. He trusts me so much that he has brought me information that he feels I need to know. And I make sure to keep the information safe and to also approach him when something happens in my life.

As much as I am advocating for communication, I do not advocate for meddling. Do not play the communication card where you know you are meddling in your partner's affairs. Remember that your partner has his/her own individuality that needs to be respected. Information about your partner

from this part of his life will be communicated to you when he/she is ready to.

Anything that concerns your relationship is what you should be concerned about. Do not go out and try to make your partner tell you things about him/herself that does not concern you. What he/she does at work is none of your business unless it is affecting your relationship. You cannot demand to know why he accepted a certain project or is taking a new job.

This is controlling behavior that I do not advocate for. It is another reason relationships are crumbling. You cannot force information out of your partner. Information about their individuality has to come willingly. Be happy when this information is shared with you because your partner is letting you into a part of his/her life that he/she could have kept away. Remember that this does not mean your partner is becoming a stranger. You are aware of who he/she is but information of things like the new contract they got may not be shared with you.

Anything to do with your relationship is the information you are entitled to. Even the tiniest of information that affects your relationship is important to you and should be shared.

A healthy communication in a relationship is the foundation of trust and love. Both of you have confidence in each other and you are positive your partner is always true with you. There will be no room for anxiety and insecurities because your confidence in your partner will help you eliminate all types of fear.



## COURAGE

You need to be courageous when approaching your partner to give you some information. First, you need to layout your feelings courageously. And make sure it is respectful and you are not lashing out. Come to your partner with the respect he/she deserves but be courageous.

Ask what you want to know courageously. Let your partner see that you respect him/her and the importance of the information. Sometimes your partner could be keeping something from you because he/she does not think it is important to you. It is still keeping information which is wrong, but tell your partner why you need it.

Show him/her in a respectful and courageous way of how keeping the information has caused you problems. How you have been hurt in the process. And as your partner gives you this information you should listen. You approached him/her to know what the information was. So do not start an argument and block him/her from speaking. Listen.

When you beat around the bush when you are looking for information, your partner will not take you seriously. When you are not courageous you may even forfeit going to get the information anyway. This is not right. It undermines the whole idea about communicating. You should ask so you can be told what you want to know. And ask courageously to make sure you are getting all the information you need.

Being courageous means you will be assertive as you speak. You will ask clearly and state exactly what you want to know. It is not like you are asking for vague information and making it hard for your partner to know what exactly to tell you.

## HAVE TRUST

Trust takes away anxiety, fears, and insecurities. It makes you feel safe and secure when you are communicating with your partner. You will not fear his/her reaction and both of you will be vulnerable with each other.

Trust will give you confidence in your partner and know that he/she is not going to spread your information to people it does not concern. You will be confident in their loyalty and secret keeping. And you will share whatever information you have.

I was watching a movie about a drug war between a husband and wife. Both were drug cartels and they hated each other so much. Their hate for each other made them do a lot of harm and damage to hurt the other and many people died and lost their lives in the process. As we watched, my husband asked me why they would not just divorce each other if they had so much hate for each other.

He must have missed the first part of the movie where both of them refused to divorce so the other would not share their secrets. There was a time they were so in love and they had trust for each other. They shared their information freely and a lot of secrets were passed between them.

But now that they were rivals, each feared that the other would relay their words to people that did not deserve to hear them. So they were now rival drug lords but they still stayed married. Their marriage kept their trust in each other intact.

Where there is trust there is no jealousy. You will not be constantly seeking validation from your partner because you are jealous and afraid that he/she is seeing other people. Communication of who he/she relates with will not bother you a lot and there will be no fights because of this.

## PROCRASTINATION

Stop keeping off the communication. Sometimes people deliberately wait too long to communicate with their partners. Keeping it off does not change what you have to say. The information will remain the same but how your partner takes it is what may change.

Waiting too long may make your partner suffer for a long and unnecessary time. This suffering is not fair and it will bring harm to your relationship especially when your partner finds out from someone else and not you.

These scenarios can be avoided. You can both decide to be open with each other when you need to be open. Stop waiting to get to a point where it is very important that you open up. Do not wait to reach a point where a lot of damage has been done for you to talk. Just be open about it when there is still time to salvage what you have.

Procrastinating makes the situation worse and the wound deeper. It will take long to heal when the damage has already been done. Sometimes healing may not come and both of you may fall off your relationship and go your separate ways.

## DO NOT BE NEGATIVE IN YOUR COMMUNICATION

Choose your words wisely. Do not use them to bring your partner down. Also do not let your fears, anxiety, and insecurities drive you as you approach your partner to ask for some information. The emotions you may get from this may make you say a lot of demeaning things to your partner.

Also as you communicate do not use negative words to try and show your superiority and bring down your partner. This is wrong and will break a lot of things in the relationship.

Sometimes you do not even have to wait and talk when your partner has done something wrong. He/she may have a habit of always leaving their shoes in the wrong place. As long as he/she knows where the shoes should be placed and has been reminded a reasonable amount of times just be silent. On the day that your partner places his/her shoes at the right place now speak about it by commending him/her for doing it right this time.

This will pose a challenge to your partner. I do this to my husband sometimes and because he already knew the right way and chose not to do it for a long time, he feels guilty and embarrassed. I have gotten him to change a lot of behaviors like this and he complains that I use reverse psychology on him a lot.

This works in two ways, the first is the situation is turned to your favor and secondly, both of you avoid a confrontation. The information was passed kindly and respectfully and it was received the same way. You have also saved yourself the stress of having to comment on every wrong thing that your partner does.

## STAY OPTIMISTIC

Sometimes when I want to ask for some information from my husband, I feel like he may just brush it off and send me away without it. But I am always optimistic that he will open up and tell me what I want to know.

It takes courage to approach him because sometimes the line between his individuality and our relationship is not so clear. But I still go and we both make it happen.

Never assume that expressing your feelings to your partner will yield no result. This will often result in a self-fulfilling prophecy where you feel like you expressing your feelings about something and seeking information about it will be futile. And I have explained the power of the subconscious mind. It manifests what you believe. If you believe it will be futile then it will be. But if you believe that you and your partner will have a good conversation where you will communicate and share information then it will happen.

Being pessimistic would also hinder your expression and communication as you will find yourself not relaying the information in a proper way. You will either be too arrogant or you will hide the important things from your partner and only tell them what you think is safe to tell them.

Approach your communication of feelings with a mindset that it will be beneficial to both you and your partner. This makes it easier for both of you to open up and express your true feelings.

## IDENTIFY A MIDDLE GROUND WITH YOUR PARTNER

Communication of your feelings may end up being a back and forth argument with your partner because people often tend to result in defensive mechanisms when they are asked about something. Some people will feel like you are attacking them or accusing them of something when you approach them to give you some information. And they may become defensive and an argument may arise from this. I have witnessed it in my office with couples when one asks the other about something and the partner becomes so defensive that I have to intervene before the situation gets out of hand.

The outcome of any communication will be satisfactory if both parties agree on what they would find as a meaningful outcome from communicating. Both of you should be able to find a middle ground that will convince you both the importance of being open about that particular information because you see the benefits it has for both of you.

This is the best way because both of you are able to see why the information is better for the other party. You will see that withholding the information is causing more harm than good and it will be beneficial if it is shared between the two of you.

I advise people in relationships to communicate as often as they can and as much as they have to. Many couples pile up information and cause a lot of harm where the relationship begins to crumble because of the mess caused. Piling the information is another form of procrastinating. It is also a way of saying you do not think the information is important to your partner so there is no need to tell him/her.

When you pile up so much your partner will only see that you were hiding things from him/her. And things may get ugly in the process.

Where there is a gap and damage that has been caused by lack of communication, I advise that both parties find a way to heal from it. This will help you to move on from it and get to a better place where both of you will learn how to communicate better. And you will have forgiven each other.





## HAVE FUN WITH YOUR PARTNER IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Fun should be a priority in your relationship no matter how busy the two of you get. Both you and your partner should prioritize having fun together. Never underestimate the power of having fun and enjoying each other's company.

Having fun comes easily at the beginning of the relationship. Both of you are always planning dates and trips where you can be together and spend time doing things you love. This is when you learn about your partner's interests and hobbies. You learn what they do in life and why they are the way they are.

The mistake people make in their relationship is they think that the dates at the beginning are the only time you should be having fun and getting to know your partner. People think that after this time you have had all the fun and you know your partner fully and you should now concentrate on other important things.

Fun is a priority and it should never stop. Who your partner was when you started dating is not who he/she is going to be six months or three years down the line. Remember that your partner has his/her individuality. You are constantly obligated to keep up and learn new things about your partner.

Both of you should be able to communicate and connect with each other. You should be in the know of who your partner is now and what he/she is interested in. And this is best done when you take the time to have fun. It becomes boring and tiresome when you and your partner are having official conversations when both of you want to connect. These conversations should be fun and exciting.

There are times that you will be required to be serious but you should also be serious about having fun together. Look back to the days you started dating and how it was easy for you to plan dates and places to go and have

fun. This was when you were both excited about this new thing you are doing together.

Both of you always wanted to spend time together. You both could not stand being apart from each other for a long time. I know this excitement because I went through it too. The problems in my relationship started when we both stopped having fun. My husband became “something else I have to deal with” in my life.

I still loved him immensely at this time and I could not imagine a life without him. But the fun of it was taken away. Now he was the father of my children and he was obligated by society to come back home every day. We were both obligated to live together as husband and wife and to provide for our children.

At that time we allowed ourselves to become a typical married couple that took the children to school and went to work. Then we return to the house in the evening and prepare for the next day. There was nothing so exciting about it.

When my husband and I fell off the fun train our children fell with us. Because we were no longer having fun together our children were also not having fun. We spent most weekends, holidays, and vacations indoors. It was really sad because we were ruining our children’s lives in the process. Children should be allowed to experience many things so it can shape their future and their character.

During therapy, our therapist asked us to both plan for a date when we would both dress up and go out for a good meal. He asked that my husband wear a suit and I wear a nice dress and heels and even do my makeup. My husband was even asked to go for a haircut and I was told to go get a hair touchup.

It was refreshing to go on that date. I felt the excitement and giddy feeling I always had in my heart before when I used to prepare to go on a date with my husband. The whole process of preparing and getting ready

was therapy on its own and for a moment I even forgot that this was something prescribed to us by the therapist.

During our date my husband and I did something we have not in a long time; we laughed. This may sound like something that is supposed to be done all the time but it does not come easy. Laughing is really good but it will not happen if you do not have fun.

That date was really eye-opening and stress relieving. It made me learn new things about my husband like he now preferred chicken to beef and he had taken a liking to white dry wine. I did not know this about him because I was preoccupied with other things in life. We spoke about a lot of things that night.

It was so refreshing and brought us many steps closer to our healing. My husband and I were able to remember why we loved each other. I was pleased and happy with the small gestures he did for me like holding the door open and pulling my seat for me. These are the things that made me love him even more. He was considerate and caring and I loved it.

When we went back to our therapist, he asked us how we loved the experience and we told him how it was therapeutic for us. Then he pointed out something new that my husband and I had done that day, we both rode in the same car on the way to therapy. This shocked us too. At this time, we were facing so many problems that we did not want to be together. Both of us had our own cars and would go for the therapy session separately.

Our one date brought back the bond and my husband even offered to pick me up from work so we could go to therapy together. We even became more intimate with each other, something that had not happened for many months. One date where we shared memories and laughed caused this.

The therapist told us that we were even more flexible and relaxed and not stiff with each other as we were in the previous sessions. He prescribed that we set aside one day in the week to have fun. My husband and I took this advice and started being more intentional with date nights.

Sometimes we decided to remember our young days and we would go watch a movie. Other nights were elegant and we went for a nice formal dinner where we enjoyed the food and the drinks. Within a few months we even started planning weekend vacations.

Our children were having more fun too because we started taking them out more. We went for picnics together on weekends and took them to experience different things. Not only was our bond as a couple growing, but our family bond became even stronger.

My husband could now take our sons to go watch a game or they would watch in the house. Everybody was happy because we were having fun. Life was no longer boring and we could laugh and enjoy life together.

You should always prioritize fun in your relationship for your love to remain fresh and strong. When you stop having fun your relationship becomes an obligation. It is your responsibility to schedule fun sessions and activities. They have never come automatically. Even when you were first dating both of you were still planning your dates. The same case applies here.

Having fun with your partner creates a bond between the both of you. Both of you will make memories and experience new things together. Your love will be refreshed every day. The activities you do together when you are having fun will remind you of your love and rekindle your bond.

Indulging in fun activities takes you away from the daily hustle and you are able to ease the stress and tension from your life and concentrate on your partner. I love it when my husband and I go away for some time. We are both able to be away from everything and just be together. The bond that we have after this is just amazing. We are able to focus on the two of us only.

I get to fall in love with my husband again. Any anxiety and insecurities I had are cleared because I get to see how much he loves me and appreciates me. All my doubts are breezed away and we return more in love

with each other than we were before. During these times, we are able to reflect on any problems we may have been facing and find solutions to them.

Laughter is a remedy for stress and tension. When you laugh you heal from your worries and fears. And when you do it with your partner you both ease the tension and stress in your relationship. You are taking them away by replacing them with happiness and love. Both of you are giving yourselves an opportunity to be in love.

I have seen couples that are afraid to be together with each other. The problems between them have become so many that they are no longer comfortable to be in each other's company. You should not have this fear. Your partner is your partner. There is a reason you are both together.

If you do not spend time together then the love between you will be lost and forgotten. There is no bond between you and you cannot fulfill each other's love language. You should preserve and prioritize the time you spend together and use it to have fun. Take every opportunity you have. The world has become really crazy and involving these days that if you do not make the time you will never have time.

I advise that you and your partner have a date night every week. Even if you do not go out you can have a nice meal in the house and enjoy a good movie cuddling on the couch. Do something for each other that will make the whole experience bring back your love.

## WORK TOGETHER

Both of you have to work towards having fun. One party cannot be the one to bear the burden of planning and wondering if you will agree to go. As a partner in the relationship, you should take part in the planning of these activities so they are successful.

For you to have fun, you should be able to prepare yourself. Fun comes from inside our hearts because this is where we feel it. If you go to do a fun activity but your heart is not there you will not enjoy it. You will have wasted your partner's planning and time and their good intentions because you did not enjoy what you were supposed to enjoy.

If you are also not actively involved then fun activities will not happen at all because your partner will feel like he/she drags you to things you are not interested in. I know I would feel bad if I keep planning something exciting and my partner shows no interest in it.

You do not have to plan the activities with your partner, but when they do happen be happy and excited. Allow yourself to experience it and appreciate what your partner is doing for you and your relationship.

Surprise your partner once in a while and plan some fun activities for you to do. The joy and happiness your partner will have will be amazing. He/she will see that you are invested in the relationship and will be able to eliminate doubts and fears. This way you are eliminating anxiety and fears from your relationship as well.

## TRY NEW THINGS TOGETHER

The whole idea about having fun is getting to experience something together. The memories made and the time shared rekindle your love and make your bond stronger.

When you are trying new things, you are sharing a new experience. You are both being there for each other as you learn something new. It becomes easier and you both get confidence to do it.

I tried sky diving with my husband and it was an amazing experience. One that I would not have done on my own. I thank God that he agreed to try it with me and now we both have the memories from it. We felt really nice coming back home and explaining to our children our experience. They were a little jealous though.

When your partner agrees to try something new with you, he/she is agreeing to hold your hand and to experience something with you.

## HAVE A BUCKET LIST

You can come up with a bucket list of all the fun activities you would like to do together. Get the excitement of coming up with the list and accomplishing everything that you have written on it.

This will help you to keep planning and to have something fun to do all the time. You will not run out of ideas because you can always refer to your list and do something on it. Both of you will be accomplishing something from it and it will excite you.

The main reason for having fun is to create a bond. Where there is a bond there is a connection. Both of you will be able to eliminate anxiety and insecurities in your relationship because when you are connected you will be able to communicate with each other.

Both of you will share memories and get to know more and better with each other. You will be on your way to happiness and growth in your relationship. Stop putting fun as the last thing on your schedule but incorporate it into everything. Make fun something the two of you always have and not something that happens occasionally. You can always seek help and find tips to make it easier for you to embrace having fun together.





## CONCLUSION

For your relationship to work both you and your partner have to put in work. Treat your relationship as your baby. By doing so you will make it your priority. As much as we all maintain our individualities when we are in relationships, our relationships are what determine a lot in our lives. It is for this reason that they must be treated as priorities.

A relationship on its own has no love, happiness, peace, joy, and fun. All these good things have to be planted in the relationship and be nourished so they can germinate and grow.

It is not automatic that because you are in a relationship you are going to love your partner. This is not how it works. Remember there was a time you were both strangers and did not know each other. And when you did not know each other you did not love each other. It is by spending time together to know each other and to grow your feelings towards each other that you sowed love between the two of you.

If you keep nourishing the seed you planted it will grow. And if you do not the opposite will happen. It is quite possible to fall out of love because you have neglected the seed you planted. This means that the seed can wither and die or it may not reach maturity and start to bear fruits.

If you do not sow love, happiness, and peace in your relationship then the field in your union will remain bare. When it does, like any other bare land, weeds start to grow. These weeds are fear, anxiety, and insecurities. They grow rapidly and do not need any nourishment to mature and start bearing fruits like constant arguments, disrespect, and lack of communication.

Just like when you have no good habits bad habits come rushing in is the same thing that will happen here. When there is fear and anxiety in a relationship then insecurities are inevitable. If you are insecure you will not be able to grow because you constantly believe that your partner is doing

things to betray the relationship. You become convinced that he/she is hiding things from you and doing things that are not right.

If communication is also a problem both of you will not be able to have a rational conversation where you sit and solve your problems. Communication is very important for any relationship to remain healthy. Both of you should be able to talk to each other and exchange information about each other freely.

Trust is something else that should be sown into a relationship. Without trust, you will not be able to believe each other. There will be no confidence that your partner loves you and works for your good and that of the relationship. Without trust you will be unable to communicate and be free with each other.

Lack of trust invites secrecy into the relationship. And where there are secrets, gaps are created. A gap in the relationship is where one partner does not know what happens in the life of the other. You are just two people that are together but have no connection. A relationship does not grow in such circumstances. Rather it crumbles.

You and your partner should never stop dating each other. Both of you should be eager to learn about each other as you were during your first dates. Make sure you are always in the know of your partner's love language. Fulfilling your partner's love language is the best indication of love. You can do a lot to prove your love but the message may be lost if it is not in line with the love languages.

Your partner's love language is very important to the happiness in your relationship. You will be able to communicate and relate with him/her at a love level. A level where your hearts will be brought together and you will both feel the love between you.

Building a happy and healthy relationship should be your short-term and long-term goal. Both of you have to be active to make this happen. The effort should come from the two of you if you both want to grow and make

good things happen in the relationship. A joint effort will help you both seal the gaps from your end.

In a relationship, both of you should give a hundred percent of yourself to it so it can flourish. Your actions should complement those of your partner. By giving your all you are allowing your partner to be able to see you and to know who you are. And you will know the same as him/her. Then both of you will fall into a system where you are everything for each other for the sake of your growth.

Romance should be continuance in your union. Do not leave it for the first days then fall into a boring routine afterwards. Always have time for romance. It is the secret to every love language. It brings in the extra touch of love and creates a bond and connection. Go out on romantic dates or send each other gifts, text, or messages that are romantic. Stop fearing romance. You are together because you are in love so romance is expected and allowed.

The chapters in this book have clearly and simply highlighted what you should do in order to eliminate fear and anxiety in your relationship. But the most important thing is both you and your partner should be willing to put in the effort. Both of you should work together to make this work. You should both have a conviction to be better so you can have better.

If you are really struggling, I suggest that you seek professional help. It can be from a therapist, minister, or even your friends. Find a neutral third party that is competent and will be able to help you sort through your problems. And as you seek help remember that it is both of you against your problems. You are not going to court where you need to bring evidence and prove your case to show that your partner is the one in the wrong.

The fact that you are seeking help shows that you love each other. Your love will keep you strong and together. You are seeking help so you can be

able to eliminate the hurdles and get to a point of happiness where you can both enjoy your love.

It is possible to eliminate anxiety and insecurities in your relationship. Follow the tips and re-read the book as much as you have to so you can understand the advice. And find good ways to use it in your situation to grow a better relationship.



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# UNDERSTANDING YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE LANGUAGE

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12 SECRETS ON HOW BETTER COMMUNICATION WILL HELP  
YOU BUILD A HEALTHY AND HAPPY RELATIONSHIP

*“I’m not telling you it is going to be easy- I am telling you it is going to be worth it.”*

*Art Williams*



## INTRODUCTION

Do you find it challenging conversing with your spouse? Are you tired of debating and fighting with your husband or wife whenever you engage in conversation? Is your partner no longer talking to you?

Relationship communication issues start because each one of us is a flawed person. We may have certain differences in hairstyle, preferences, attitudes, etc., but nobody has the same things that we do. So, when we communicate with one another, it's not unusual to observe that we can have difficulties. Every one of us sees things differently, has different and opposing views. It is by knowing the people around you, the people in your relationship, that you can learn to accept that we are different beings.

Communication in relationships is a frequent issue for men and women regardless of background. Married couples usually have a lot of interaction communication and relationship issues because the people involved in the relationship don't want to listen. Many guys want ladies to pay attention to them, particularly when they converse about marital issues. They really want the woman to make the changes. Place a dot at the end of their sentence, that's IT!

This episode could have been the worst headache of any woman. Conversing without really responding, for the most part, to a man's side, is very infuriating and annoying. This is especially true if you haven't settled the argument yet and he does not want to talk anymore. Relationship communication problems emerged from the unwillingness of men to settle relationship problems.

Many couples (including us) have had to deal with these communication issues at some stage in their marriage, and it's not fun! Screaming, yelling, anger, frustration, resentment-it can definitely be unbearable and could even kill your willingness not only to effectively

communicate with your husband or wife, but also to savor your relationship. But you don't have to unnecessarily worry about that

Effective communication is no exception to a happy marriage. It's natural to bicker and even have minor fights with your partner because you both have your own ideas and your own thoughts. But if things get out of the way, it can damage the marriage.

Irrespective of whatever communication problems you're struggling with, you can learn how to communicate effectively with your spouse today.

Whether you feel that you're not being heard, that you can't hear your spouse, or that you want to communicate better with your spouse without fighting or screaming, this book will show you how.

Get everything you could ever need from relationship books to couples in one convenient title equals to understanding your partner's love language. This workbook contains a number of immersive activities and structured interactions that will help you solidify your communication skills, strengthen your connection and resolve potential issues.

Whether you're working out specific issues in your relationship or just looking to bond as a couple, this standout among relationship books for couples—covering everything from finances to sex—provides you with an all-encompassing exploration of your romantic partnership, this book is an excellent 'How-To Guide' for practicing the key skills that will help you identify and overcome communication barriers and achieve relationship success with the important people in your life--your spouse or partner, child or children, parents, siblings, friends, co-workers, customers--everyone!

As a former school teacher and a relationship expert, At forty-one, now a wife and a mother of three, I have mastered the art of nurturing and exhorting not just young ones but humans in general, with extreme patience, kindness, and empathy.

As a relationship and parenting coach who has taught monthly parenting classes, hosted and spoken at different parenting and relationship workshops, written helpful, instructional books. Thus, I have decided to come up with this relationship communication guide to teach readers to communicate with less blame and more

Understanding your partner's love language teaches readers how to connect effectively and get more out of marriage. If you're talking to your boss, trying to persuade your mom, or romancing your significant other, the value of effective communication in your day-to-day life is inevitable. Through the strategies outlined in this essential guide, you can become a better communicator, practice open communication, and be able to handle almost any situation with self-belief and compassion. Every person is wired differently for love, with different habits, needs, and reactions to conflict.

The great news is that so many people's thinking work in similar ways and react well to security, attachment, and rituals, making it possible for the brain to be neurologically more loving and less conflict-ridden.

This workbook is a guide to understanding the mind of your partner and able to enjoy a loving relationship established on respect and commitment. Analyzing research findings on how and why love lasts from psychology, family systems, and emotional control, this book presents twelve core principles that can enhance any relationship.

Married life or some other kind of loving relationship between a male and a female is a fantastic thing, and no couple should permit the threat of poor communication to bring an undeserved end to such a delightful union. Arguments, struggles, and misunderstandings among couples can go a long way to destroying a long-term marriage in split seconds. It can also be compared to cancer in the sense that if it is not treated with any sense of urgency, it could eat deeply after a long stay in the relationship and could cause irredeemable damage to your marital life.

It's vital that you don't allow this marital and relationship threat to put your relationship through unnecessary anguish when you have a solution.

So keep your eyes glued and let me walk you through the journey towards making your communication in your relationship and marriage a beautiful one.





## KNOW YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLES

*H*ave you at any point talked to a companion, relative, or your partner and felt, ideally, just for the moment that you could not communicate? Somehow, regardless of how you attempted to account for yourself, the other individual didn't seem to understand and didn't "get it."

Communication between two people can be essential, pure, and streaming or it very well may be difficult, stressed, and choked. So much relies on communication style.

I recollect an experiment in which two people were set in front of an audience to talk. The first two speakers appeared to indeed battle and couldn't prop a progression of conversation up. For this situation, the communication problem had to do with speed. One of the speakers had a fast style of talking, terminating words, expressions, and sentences rapidly and absent many deferrals. The other speaker had a usually moderate pace, rambling forward a couple of words, wavering, thinking, and afterward communicating a couple of more words. The fast speaker continued talking, not allowing the slower speaker to ring in.

The next two speakers were usually exceptionally moderate. One talked, both paused, quietness for quite a while. The subsequent individual talked. Both paused. Another time of quietness, that conversation flowed, but at an agonizingly slow pace, making it difficult for the relentless people in the crowd to remain associated and tune in.

And afterwards, the last two speakers started to talk. Each spoke quicker than the other, hopping into the conversation, interfering with the other, and shooting out their words without breaking a sweat. These were two usually quick speakers.

Even though that experiment was interesting to me at that point, from that point forward, I have discovered that there are many different styles of

talking and communicating. Whether the pace is quick or moderate is only one of many elaborate differences between two speakers.

Each individual has an exceptional communication style, a manner by which they collaborate and trade data with others.

Thus, this takes us to have a more profound glance at the four basic communication styles that people use to convey in relationships which are: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive.

It's critical to understand every communication style and why people use them. For instance, the assertive communication style has been seen as best since it fuses the best parts of the various styles.

When we separate these four styles, we'll better understand each style's attributes, standard expressions, and what makes them one of a kind.

The first communication style is known as the passive style. People who utilize the passive communication style regularly act indifferently, respecting others. For the most part, passive communicators neglect to communicate their sentiments or requirements, permitting others to communicate. Much of the time, a passive communicator's absence of outward communication can prompt misunderstanding, outrage, or resentment. But passive communicators are also simple to coexist as they tailor others and "accept the way things are."

Instances of expressions that the people who utilize a passive communication style would state or may accept include:

"It truly doesn't make a difference that much."

"I simply need to keep harmony."

The aggressive style which is the second style is regularly evident when somebody conveys aggressively. You'll hear it, see it and even feel it.

The aggressive communication style is accentuated by talking in a loud and demanding voice, keeping in touch and ruling or controlling others by accusing, scaring, reprimanding, compromising, or assaulting them, among different qualities.

Instances of expressions that an aggressive communicator would utilize include:

"I'm correct, and you're off-base."

"I'll get my direction regardless."

"It's all your shortcomings."

Passive-aggressive communication style clients seem passive on a superficial level, but inside the person may feel weak or stuck, developing a resentment that prompts fuming or carrying on in inconspicuous, indirect, or mysterious ways.

Passive-aggressive communicators may likewise seem agreeable, but may quietly be doing the inverse.

At last, passive-aggressive communicators know about their needs, but now and again battle to voice them.

Instances of expressions that a passive-aggressive communicator would utilize include:

"That is fine with me, but don't be astonished if another person gets frantic."

"Indeed, we can do things your way" (at that point mumbles to self that "your way" is moronic).

Thought-to-be the best type of communication, the assertive communication style includes an open communication connection while not domineering. Assertive communicators can communicate their own needs, wants, thoughts, and sentiments while also thinking about others' requirements. Assertive communicators focus on the two sides to win in a circumstance, offsetting their privileges with the privileges of others.

One of the keys to assertive communication is utilizing "I" statements, for example, "I feel disappointed when you are late for a gathering," or, "I don't care for clarifying this again and again." It demonstrates responsibility for and practices without accusing the other individual.

Instances of expressions an assertive communicator would utilize include:

"We are similarly qualified to communicate consciously with each other."

"I understand I have options in my life, and I think about my choices."

"I regard the privileges of others."

To become an Assertive communicator, understanding how others impart can be vital to conveying the desired information to them. So as to build up a more assertive communication style, here are a couple of tips to remember: Take possession (use "I" statements), keep in touch, figure out how to state "no", and always voice your requirements and wants unquestionably.

## COMMUNICATION STYLES IN RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COUPLES AND SPOUSES

Most couples do have different communication styles. Sexual orientation, age, childhood, instruction, social differences, personality type, past relationship history, and many different elements come into play when it comes to how we communicate.

But did you realize that you and your partner can communicate differently and still have a stable, happy relationship?

Reliable communication doesn't necessitate that you share information or handle conflict the very same way. Indeed, it's regularly our differences that make us all the more intriguing and appealing to someone else.

The ideal approach to improving your relationship is by studying your partner's communication style, just as your own. Here are four kinds of communication styles you may perceive.

Amplifier and Condenser Communication Style is a typical communication difference is the style of the "amplifier" and the "condenser."

These terms were instituted by creator and therapist Dr. Norman Wright, who says an amplifier is "somebody who communicates by sharing what they need to state in incredible volumes of subtleties."

A condenser is one "who is most happy with sharing minimal more than what is completely vital."

As an amplifier, you may feel baffled that your condenser spouse doesn't talk more about musings and sentiments and doesn't share enough detail. You may learn about being disengaged or cut.

A condenser may feel overpowered and overflowed with the entirety of the data the amplifier shares. An excessive number of words feel diverting and pointless.

The solution: Amplifiers can work on truncating their musings and clarifications when they verbalize them to their condenser partner.

They can work out their musings and concentrate the key focuses on verbalizing or talking it out with another amplifier before speaking with their condenser partner.

Condensers can put forth a more considerable amount of an attempt to verbalize contemplations and emotions with the amplifier partner, realizing that sharing more will make association and closeness.

Another communication style difference is competitive versus dependent. If you have a more dependent style, you need to unite people to work out problems.

When a choice should be made, you're probably going to carry your partner into the effective procedure and ask their supposition before you choose.

A competitive communicator is more arranged toward force, rivalry, and strength in their communication style. In general, their conversations will be more assertive, and testing and they want to settle on choices all alone without much or any contribution from others.

The solution: Dependent communicators can feel injured when their partner doesn't offer a similar agreeable communication process.

They should solicit their competitive partners ahead of time from a conversation to share and examine an issue in a more agreeable manner.

The competitive partner will do well to temper them regularly, want to go only at transparently challenge their partner. They can figure out how to tune in and welcome criticism before communicating their musings, regardless of whether it feels like an exercise in futility.

As regards direct and Indirect communication Style, there are two essential ways spouses communicate what they need: either directly or indirectly.

One of you may be direct, and when you need, want, or feel something, you have no problem coming right out and saying it.

However, one of you may be more indirect and will keep down on precisely what you need, need, or feel.

You may state it in a more indirect, unclear way. For instance, this partner may state, "I'm thinking about whether there's an occupation out there that may pay you more."

When these two different communicators are in a relationship, there's a more noteworthy open door for strain and stress.

The solution: Direct communicators need to recollect that their words can be twisted or insult their partner.

The more indirect partner needs to figure out precisely what they mean without shrinking away from the real issue.

This may feel awkward for somebody who cares to hold nothing back, with training, you can figure out how to express your real thoughts without being cruel or coldhearted.

Another style is the hot and Cold Communication Style. During struggle or genuine conversations, there are regularly two different ways you will move toward the circumstance. The partner who utilizes a "hot style" needs to immediately connect to put the issue out there and complete it.

If the problem isn't settled quickly, this partner feels restless, troubled, or engrossed.

The partner with the "cold style" doesn't do well with this exceptional and quick methodology. The individual in question needs an ideal opportunity to thoroughly consider things, but not seemingly out of the blue.

The solution: The hot style communicator feels the immense strain on diminishing the pressure, but the individual can figure out how to step back, take a full breath, and give the other partner time to process their feelings.



The cold style communicator needs to regard how much uneasiness it makes for their hot style partner to defer imparting. It can aggravate things much if you deliberately hold out excessively long.

## THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE

We are altogether unique and experience the world in one of a kind ways. We have to ensure we are conveying such that the beneficiary understands it, and the equivalent is genuine when it comes to love. Is it true that you are exhibiting your love for your partner such that they will hear and understand it?

In general, we will give love in the manner in which we want to receive it - which may not be a similar path as our partner. So the entirety of your endeavors might be futile, and they might be feeling rather unloved.

The Love Language system can be precious in helping us understand ourselves and our partners better. But what makes the use of this knowledge conceivable is merciful and legitimate communication with your partner, coupled with a certifiable want to share joy and association."

Read ahead to get a once-over on the five primary love languages, just as some useful bits of knowledge on how you and your significant other can identify them in one another and, all the more critically, influence them in your relationship

The first is the act of service, with demonstrations of service, it's everything about the need to feel like your partner esteems you and is eager to invest an unmistakable exertion in showing their appreciation.

If your Love Language is "Demonstrations of Service," you feel generally loved and acknowledged when your partner contemplates what they can do to facilitate the obligations that are burdening you. Hearing "let me help you with that" or "I previously dealt with it" is more energizing to you than those photos of hot folks with infant creatures (indeed, it is a whole book). Apathy, inability to play out a lot of errands, or being oblivious with how they can help you are all simple ways for you to feel undervalued and unloved.

With respect to words of affirmation, If you ache for compliments from your partner or calling you pet names make you blush, this may be your love language. Much the same as touch, this sort of talk has a range, so ensure you and your partner understand where your specific range lies, clarifies Dr. Chuba. Does hearing how appealing turn you on? Or then again, do you appreciate a more express sort of language?"

If your partner longs for words of attestation, leave a careful note in their vehicle or send sweet messages on more than one occasion per day. Remember, when unique events move around, it's everything about the words you put in the card.

The quality time love language is a love language that more people need to get settled with because the more significant part of us is so surged and separated in our day by day that we have overlooked how to just 'be' together.

For you, nothing says "I love you" like marathon watching Game of Thrones or playing Scrabble on a Friday night. Having your partner's full focus is the time when you feel generally valued. Interruptions during quality time or deferring dates can cause you to feel like you aren't critical to your partner. Booking the time to be together is urgent to the achievement of your relationship.

Accepting gifts as a love language may seem as though it's materialistic or saved for gold diggers. But if this is your language, don't scrutinize your character. It has more to do with the idea behind the gift than the gift itself. You welcome the mindfulness behind gift-giving (regardless of whether it's a marvelous birthday present or bringing home your preferred magazine from an excursion to the drugstore). All gifts, regardless of whether little and every day or vast and incredible, remind you how much you matter to your partner and how much care and exertion they believe you're worth. Missed birthday events or negligent gifts are your relationships bad dream since it causes you to feel like your partner couldn't care less about you.

First of all: Physical touch doesn't generally compare to being sexual. "Physical touch sounds basic enough when applied to sex, but many people don't understand that touch is a language and communicates expectation.

"Most importantly, it's significant for an individual with this love language to understand their own needs and limits around touch, and afterward communicate them to their partner. For this, it assists with considering touch a range: On the one side, you have dispassionate touch, and on the contrary, you have sexual touch, with changing kinds and degrees of touch in the middle."

For example, a terrible day may require an embrace, a night out on the town out, clasping hands; and on your film night in, you can exploit some nestling.

So why is knowing your partner's love language so critical to the accomplishment of your relationship?

## WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE LANGUAGE

It will enable you and your partner to feel more valued - consider it: if you're a "Demonstrations of Service" individual dating a "Words of Affirmation" individual, your partner may shower you with compliments and "I love you"s consistently, but you would spend the relationship not feeling genuinely refreshing in light of the fact that they never offer to get things done or do the dishes. Understanding your partner's love language will assist you with observing how they show their love, so you do feel loved and acknowledged, knowing the manner by which they give their love is different than yours.

Another major reason is that It will permit you to communicate your needs more. We've all had those easily overlooked details we wish our partner would simply manage without us asking; complimenting us when we spruce up, bringing home blossoms, arranging a night out on the town. When they don't do these things, it very well may be destructive on the grounds that in our brains, those things compare to their appreciation. We likewise may stress they'd simply be doing those things since they feel compelled to if we ask them to, not out of thankfulness or love.

It will show you and your partner what you both ought to manage without being inquired.

Knowing your partner as a "Physical Touch" individual will make you more insightful about holding their hand in broad daylight or embracing them when they're down, and you will have the option to understand the significance and significance behind these little demonstrations that, for you, would somehow be insignificant. Your partner will be more cognizant about what they can do to show you how much they acknowledge and love you. When you and your partner both know how different gives thankfulness and wants to receive gratefulness, it puts forth for more nice

choices and attempts that cause you and your partner both to feel loved and esteemed.

All in all, how would you decide your other half's love language? One path is to consider how they show their love for you. "Look at how your partner communicates his/her love language.

What and how we express love and want is regularly what we need to respond to. collaborations with companions, family, and even associates can reveal pieces of information, calling attention to "how you and your partner's families express love can likewise offer knowledge on your love languages.

In a perfect world, the entirety of the 5 love languages ought to be a piece of your relationship. However, there's consistently one that needs to be given first concern.

Put forth an attempt to understand what your partner needs so as to feel loved and satisfied. It might be contrary to what your love language is, and that is OK. This isn't an opposition. Or maybe, it's unrestricted love.



## DISCOVER YOUR PARTNER'S NEEDS

*W*e all need to be seen, heard, and understood. We particularly need this from our partners. We need our partners to say, Yes, I am tuning in. Indeed, I get it. Honestly, I understand your pain. I'm sorry it hurts you, and I am here. We need our partners to be keen on and think about what's going on inside our souls.

Wanting to be seen and heard and understood are fundamental human needs.

Do you love bread as much as some do? Do you know what your needs and wants are in a relationship? Think about your relationship needs like being your bread, and your wants resemble jam. Contingent upon what your love style is, you're going to need and need different things to satisfy you.



## HOW MEN'S NEEDS DIFFER FROM WOMEN'S NEEDS

Both men and women stroll into a relationship looking for very similar things: the Love, the support, and the glow. However, amusingly, each thinks that it's difficult to convey those needs to the next! Expecting obviously that the two players are mentally steady, they happen to love one another and need that relationship to go on until the end of time.

As it happens that both genders have similar essential characters and know their partners need them too. It just leaves space for pondering; why are we battling? How about we see?

As regards love and affection. Men want a woman whom they can spoil; pour all their Love and consideration over. A woman can fulfill each female job he'd ever need in his life, whether the closest companion, a lover, an associate or even a mother. So, in all honesty, men are romantic, they love flame light suppers and that feeling where they carry joy to another person. Consider it a self-agreeable system, but men aren't excessively narrow-minded all things considered!

Women need to feel loved and uncommon, to feel that somebody loves everything about her, and above all, continually convey the message that she's needed. In this manner, if her primary need is disregarded or if the message doesn't get past, that would cause a significant strain in the relationship that may never recuperate!

Men think Women Want to feel loved also. Still, most men live by this code "If you aren't requesting more, at that point I'm carrying out my responsibility right" since men know women to be this annoyingly demanding animals that if a small segment of their need is missing they'd transform men's lives into a horrific experience, till it's only how they need it to be!!

Women think men need to be loved more than they need to offer Love; that they think that it's more pleasant down at the less than desirable finish of the rope to the degree of demanding the sort of affection where if they're gone women simply quit living till they choose to mount over their overinflated ego and come back to spare lives!!

Concerning communication, Men need fair based communications, where a woman would address questions with no concealed messages, for they would prefer not to guess what anybody might be thinking or go through days attempting to understand signals when it could pause for a moment if just their partners would be clear about it. The main concern is that men lean toward straight forward conversations as long as the woman's sufficiently keen to know when and how.

Women need their words to be heard, a man who is a decent audience resembles a rare jewel. Since the more significant part of the time they needn't bother with a solution, they possibly need to express their real thoughts. When they need one, they'll request it; at precisely that point, one may begin appealing to God for men to locate a proper solution, rather than "everything will be OK"!

Men think women need them to take care of whatever problem they're griping about. By enlightening them concerning their sentiments, certain things are normal, among which men should cause the wellspring of disturbance to disappear.

Women think men need them to be shallow, stay silent when it goes to their needs and wants, and ideally manage them all alone because they'll be deserted! Furthermore, because women accept that men need no conversation whatsoever, they use manipulation, believing it's the best way to be heard without pushing her man away

When it comes to commitment and fidelity, men need commitment as much as women; it's merely a question of affirmation. Men set aside longer effort to ensure that they picked the correct woman and presumably had

more opportunity to get over their commitment issues! Other than that, they need a similar strength, the home, and a safe place. Moreover, when it comes to infidelity, it's a significant issue to men precisely as it's to women, without any exemptions or reasons.

Each woman wants the commitment, the security, knowing that she has a man - limited whom she can love and love. Men know women need commitment, such a given that even though women likewise experience cold feet, it's considerably less dangerous. In reality, most women can hardly wait to submit, they're known as commitment monstrosities!

But it's where men think women like to focus on a player is the place they're off-base, for women who need relationships never need players. Without a doubt, they'd feel unique if a player picked them over every single other woman, but rather than that little voice inside notice that a man may be cheating, they'll be left with loud alarm's shouts driving them to craziness!

Women think men endure commitment hypersensitivities that they'd just submit on physical levels, and whenever they locate a more alluring "female," they'd drool all over her and leave! It went to a typical conviction that men can't be trusted to be reliable; they'd run whenever things get only somewhat extreme, and they don't appear to deal with the entire relationship pushing ahead requirements that well!

Regarding support, Men need to achieve things with no help whatsoever from others. Sure they'd need women to inquire as to whether they need it to which they'll for the most part answer with a no but ideally to end at that as opposed to being compelled to receive the help they never needed in any case. Women need to have the support they need without requesting it honestly; women deserve such treatment in relationships! Men think women need NO SUPPORT, having confidence in the truism "treat people how you need to be dealt with" in this manner out of not having any

desire to sound excessively pushy, as long as women don't request it, men won't volunteer to do it!

One thing you need to know is that the more women love, the more they offer support; in this way, support is an indication of Love. That is why women will, in general, feel disillusioned when men don't offer that. Women think men need extraordinary support! That is, that's all anyone needs to know, just rapidly move to the following point.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR PARTNER NEEDS

The majority of us have a perceptual predisposition in the manner we communicate. Is your partner a more significant amount of a hearable individual who likes to talk and tune in? Or then again, would they say they are more open to visual information, inclining toward loads of eye to eye connection or seeing your words put vigorously? Maybe your partner inclines toward sensation communication or the boost of touch and needs real consolation on the head of verbal communication.

If you know their perceptual predisposition, you can change your communication style to work with theirs and eventually discover how to get enthusiasm back in your relationship. By being delicate to one another's inclinations, you will get a higher amount of the excitement and affection you need.

When you're on the same wavelength as your partner, you can work to all the more likely understand how to address each other's issues. These manifest from multiple points of view as there are people, but they all return to six fundamental human needs.

The essential human need is a certainty, and it should be agreeable, appreciate the joy, and maintain a strategic distance from the pain. An individual with manly vitality can meet the certainty needed by being sincerely present, transparent for their female vitality partners, in any event, when they are disturbed. Somebody with ladylike vitality can address this issue by showing their manly vitality partners that their love is unqualified – saying as much, but being available and abstaining from pulling back in any event, when things turn out badly. Next to zero enthusiasm in a relationship is frequently the consequence of uncertainty – but not the valuable sort of uncertainty.

Variety is the subsequent human need since we can practice and exhibit our physical and passionate range just when difficulties and variety are available. Every relationship has manly and ladylike vitality.. Manly empowered partners can address this issue by starting surprise dates or token gifts with their ladylike partners. Female partners can address this issue by being more provocative, and by, for those hoping to zest up the room, amazing indeed. Absence of energy in a relationship can sometimes be the consequence of straightforward fatigue, so infusing a little uncertainty into romantic experiences can stir up the everyday practice and reignite enthusiasm.

The third is to feel significance, required, uncommon, and needed. Anybody can address this issue by considering different ways they can show their partner how significant they are. What little thing would you be able to do today, this week or this month to show your partner that there is nobody else on Earth who could have their spot? What would you be able to do to show how appreciative you are for their love? How would you be able to show them their uniqueness is valued? When you center around being your partner's main fan, getting energy back in your relationship turns out to be more straightforward.

Fourth is love and connection with others. You can best address this issue for your partner by understanding how they experience the world and how they like to receive love. If your partner is exceptionally visual, they will love it if you look at them or wear their preferred garments; if your partner loves acts of kindness, even a little gift will mean everything to them.

The fifth human need is growth, because, without enthusiastic, scholarly, and otherworldly development, we can't ascend to our latent capacity. This is valid for people, but it's similarly as valid for relationships. If you're not developing, you're kicking the bucket. Put in the work that it

takes to understand one another and find creative approaches to make things work for both of you to address the absence of energy in your relationship.

The sixth and last need is contribution and giving. Giving is the key to riches and fulfillment. What might you do to make the individual you love upbeat? Okay, anticipate something consequently, or is seeing them in a beautiful state enough? When we give without desire and spotlight on gratefulness, we give energy a spot to thrive.

From these six fundamental human needs, you can start to figure out your partner's fundamental beliefs. Viably, what is critical to your partner?

When identified, you can start to interface with your partner on that level. But, how would you make sense of their guiding principle in any case? Tune in.

Listening is most likely more required than you may understand. It's more than just trusting that your turn will talk, for instance. Or maybe, listening includes a lot of perception also. To put forth a conscious attempt to understand your partner's needs, it's essential to know them.

Watch your partner. Observe things to which they react—physical touch, getting to know each other, having a conversation, gifts, and so forth.

Tuning in to your partner is critical to associate with them. Without tuning in, it's about difficult to know them, not to mention interface with them genuinely.

Indeed, even in the happiest relationships, there will be disagreements and strife. It's prevalent and typical and can be reliable if taken care of, such that it tends to your needs and your partner's needs. Time and again, when there is a struggle, you need to win. You need to be correct. You need your own needs met, and you don't consider meeting the other person's. Regardless of whether you "win" the battle, you're only setting yourself up for another. Perceiving and figuring out how to address your partner's issues isn't just a decent method to treat the individual you love. It's likewise a

decent method to carry satisfaction to your relationship and, like this, to you.



## HERE ARE FIVE WAYS YOU CAN USE TO MEET PARTNER'S MOST FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS:

The first is respect, if your relationship were a house, respect would be the foundation the house sits on. Without it, a relationship can't be sincerely sound. Limits are as often as possible crossed when there isn't respect among partners, and not acknowledging an individual's limits causes dependable resentment and outrage. One approach to show that you respect your partner is by showing sympathy. By consistently tuning in to their considerations and emotions, and validating them, you'll help fabricate closeness and respect for their independence.

Time and attention is the second one. Great relationships don't occur unintentionally. For most of us, accomplishing a happy, stable relationship includes learning many new abilities and placing in a great deal of difficult work. Perhaps the ideal approach to satisfy your partner is by giving the person in question time and attention. By concentrating on your partner while they are talking or while you're partaking in a movement together, you will cause them to feel significant, supported, seen, and acknowledged for their identity.

Affection is typically a piece of enthusiastic foreplay and sex, but necessary affection should likewise have a spot in your relationship. Embracing, kissing, and clasping hands are mostly instances of natural ways you can show affection for your partner. Saying "I love you" and offering words of thanks and caring are verbal showcases of affection that are significant, as well.

Another major need is approval, as a youngster, you looked for approval from your folks and overseers. Regardless of whether your folks met this longing, you keep on needing approval and support from your loved ones and whose supposition you esteem. It doesn't require a ton of exertion to

show your partner you support, and essential compliments are a decent spot to begin.

Security, certainty, and consistency is another way to meet your partner's needs. Life will toss many difficulties at you and change is unavoidable, regardless of whether it's a new position or the passing of a parent or another life-modifying occasion. Your relationship with your partner should offer you both a protected base while you travel through life. Consistency and consistency offer this sort of security. You need your partner to be there for you and be solid consistently, so you should be dependable to them, as well.

## SIGNS YOU MAY NOT BE FULFILLING YOUR PARTNER'S EMOTIONAL NEEDS

When you're in a relationship, it can get normal to fall into specific propensities. Making suspicions, however, that these examples are usually the most beneficial, can be perilous. It's imperative to check-in and ensure that you satisfy your partner's needs emotionally, so your relationship can remain as stable as workable as long as possible. If you are not accommodating your partner's emotional needs, your partner will probably be sad and unfulfilled. While you don't have to feel exclusively liable for your partner's prosperity, you ought to have the option to examine and give a decent measure of emotional solace.

On the other side, neglected emotional needs will, in general, yield up even in the subtlest manners.

Here are hidden signs you may not be satisfying your partner's emotional needs, as indicated by specialists.

One is that You Fight All the Time. While a partner whose emotional needs are neglected may ice you out, they may likewise raise your regular arguments into out and out fights, not knowing what else to do with their repressed feelings.

"If you and your partner appear to have similar arguments repeatedly, it could be an indication that you do not completely understand the hidden emotional need every one of you is attempting to meet," Williamson says. A partner who feels misunderstood may get sufficiently baffled to fight more than if they were feeling secure in their relationship.

Another sign is when your partner is more physically distant. Physical closeness isn't about merely sex. Also, a partner who feels an absence of emotional closeness may begin drawing endlessly from physical closeness.

Physical distance can incorporate little things, such as non-sexual touch (handholding, snuggling, embracing), When emotional needs go neglected, there is commonly a physical pullback, whether it be obvious or little." Checking into whether this separation has been a little change or becoming over an all-inclusive timeframe can help you make sense of if this is a significant issue.

One other major pointer is that your partner has to beg for validation. You may not see what your partner is cautioning you of just underneath the surface if you've made the suspicion that your relationship is excellent. But a partner who is prone to request that you compliment or validate them might be looking for comfort you aren't giving as of now.

"If your partner is continually looking for emotional validation — by requesting that you welcome them, [or] acknowledge something they have done — at that point you may not be giving them the emotional support and validation that they need," David Bennett, certified instructor, and relationship master, tells Bustle. This sort of validation-chasing might be particularly evident if your partner's love language is words of certification.

The significant point here is to consider your partner's needs while communicating yours.

If you don't communicate this, you risk your partner believing that you are entirely mindful that their needs are just a need when it's advantageous for you or some unintended message.

Sometimes, your needs will struggle with each other, and you will need to talk about it, arrange it, and go to a compromise together.

Relationships flourish when needs are met and waver when they're most certainly not. That reality, just, is non-debatable.

Try as much as could be expected to address your partner's issues consistently and know it might be with a touch of uneasiness but get it done!

Presently watch your partner and relish in their bliss, and I guarantee you, beneficial things will be returning to you.

Begin joining this training into your typical daily practice. Before you know it, addressing your partner's needs and how they like them to be met will have provoked an adjustment in you, and it won't be unnatural any longer.



## GET TO KNOW YOUR PARTNER DAILY

*H*ow well do you know your partner? Do they have the characteristics that help you improve as an individual? Do they have habits that make you mull over your relationship? Have you gotten the opportunity to become acquainted with both the best and the most exceedingly awful parts about them?

These are the questions that, if answered, can help you understand if you're with the ideal partner or not. However, you should likewise remember that not all relationships are their best, and keeping a receptive outlook about which defects merit your understanding is significant.

Knowing each other is one of the most significant of all the relationship-building aptitudes accessible to submitted couples. This relationship-building ability is undoubtedly known by couples who have expertly constructed a passionate durable marriage or a passionate severe enduring relationship.

The 'knowledge' you know about your partner recognizes this relationship from every other relationship. Nobody should know you just as your partner. Furthermore, if they do, it is a problem; it implies you and your partner need closeness. Also, for particular couples, this could be an admonition indication of genuine relationship inconvenience.

A passionate marriage or serious relationship is one in which you and your partner have intimate knowledge.

Sexual closeness is a genuine case of what it intends to 'know' one another. It is usual for you to strip for your partner and that person for you. At that point, you energize, animate, and joy each other in manners allowed to nobody else. In doing this, you find out about one another's bodies and personal feelings. This sexual closeness is just a single significant method of 'knowing' one another. Sexual knowledge is reasonable, agreeable, and

sound, and when proceeded after some time will fabricate you and your partner a passionate marriage.



## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR PARTNER?

This is an old question that most people have posed to themselves sooner or later in their lives. Regardless of what we like, your partner has contemplations and feelings that you don't know anything about.

How regularly have you arrived at a spot in your life with somebody you think you know, as well as possible, to find that they keep on astonishing you? The amazement may be lovely about something truly astonishing they have done in their carries on with that you had no clue about.

Or on the other hand, the astonishment may prompt a disappointment in a behavior that you didn't know they were prepared to do.

What does this mean? You can go through an entire lifetime with an individual and not so much know who they are by any stretch of the imagination. Similar to the entire planet we live on, we are continually changing and adjusting to our environment.

Today, you are necessarily a result of your entire life's experiences and your reactions to them. How you think, feel, and carry on as a result of every one of that has transpired before this time.

What's more, how you will be tomorrow will be a result of everyone that has occurred in the past, notwithstanding what you experience today and the choices you make about yourself as well as other people as an outcome of that experience.

Your partner may have expectations and dreams that are shrouded somewhere inside that you would never envision. Perhaps your partner doesn't feel good imparting these musings to you. Furthermore, perhaps you don't feel good sharing either. This doesn't make you a "terrible" couple. It just methods you resemble the average couple out there.

To begin with, let me get straight to the point. This is not a poor reflection on you. What will be? You can't uncover data from underneath an individual if they prefer not to impart it to you, or can you?

I talked with a lady today named Susan, who met a serviceman a couple of months back. The two have been occupied with their lives, thus had not fraternized before he was requested to go into service. He did not recount his crucial leaving and, in this manner, couldn't let Susan know where he would have been or when he would be back.

Five weeks have now gone with no communication, and Susan is pondering where he is. Has he gone into a combat area where he can't communicate with her? Or more awful despite everything has he gone to some injustice, or is he purposely maintaining a strategic distance from her?

Her disarray about this stems mostly from her not so much knowing him all around ok to know what may be the reality. As I said to her, each couple needs a particular time together to truly become more acquainted with one another toward the start of a relationship in any case frailties will regularly sneak in.

Presently, while I have said that you are continually changing and this ought to expect you to be continually open to finding who your partners are once more, there is likewise an incentive in discovering where your partners have originated from; their initial life experiences just as the experiences of their kin and guardians. This data will help you figure out the guiding principle of this conceivable partner, especially regarding you as a couple.

Concerning communication in relationships, most couples never become more acquainted with one another on the profound, close level that they could. People fear being helpless. They fear dismissal. That is the primary concern.

There is regularly a feeling of, "I won't share if you won't share as well." This is understandable. What's more, it's human nature.

People must be in a circumstance that feels sheltered and secure before they are eager to open up and disclose advantaged data about themselves. If you need your partner to impart to you, you should make an environment that advances that.

Not very far in the past, society appeared to compel people to air every one of their considerations and feelings to anyone (Oprah, Phil Donahue, Sally Jesse Raphael, and now Dr. Phil). However, that vehicle of telling the world your most profound, haziest insider facts has now been, to a great extent, supplanted by this new thing called the unscripted TV drama.

But what do we see time after time? People air their most profound musings and feelings on TV and are later crucified for their genuineness. That is passed along to others, and that is why you don't share it if you don't need to, but this mystery isn't useful for marriage.

Your partner, and perhaps you, have similar feelings of trepidation. What if I tell this individual all that I have inside and afterward: They snicker at me, they don't understand me, they later leave or separation me and take that data with them

People neglect to acknowledge that if they share everything, it incredibly cuts the chances that the relationship will end.

Communication problems in relationships are one of the most widely recognized reasons for separation and separations. (As I would like to think, practically every different problem originates from the absence of communication in relationships.)

What you need is complete instruments to slug-proof your relationship or marriage using love questions that burrow profoundly and genuinely permit you to know the individual you love. Since the communication goes the two different ways, your partner will turn out to be more open to sharing their inward most musings since you will feel good sharing.

So what may be a portion of the things that may be important for you to find out about your partner?

The questions are unending and could incorporate how they obtained their name, their family ancestry, their preferred things, how their folks settle clashes, how they settle clashes, what their relationship resembled with their kin growing up and what their expectations are for their future.

This takes us to the following part of this guide, which has to do with the crucial questions to ask your partner.

## MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO GET TO KNOW YOUR PARTNER

A fascinating aspect regarding relationships knows about your partner. Frequently, these are what we are excited about during the dating time frame. We are frequently energized and curious about what folks consider us, and men, too, regularly get some information about what women like.

Without a doubt, it is in dating that we will, in general, ask so many inquiries about one another. However, becoming more acquainted with one another ought not to end in the wake of dating. In marriage as well, you can add more flavor to your relationship through specific questions for couples. Sometimes, wedded couples don't think about asking those senseless 'whys' and 'what if' questions we frequently brought out during dating. Those may sound senseless, but by bringing up issues that way, we will, in general, know more about the convictions and estimations of our partners. It can help us decide how good we are with our partners, and as it were, knowing the odds of making a successful marriage.

These are a couple and fundamental questions to get some information about each classification that should give you a thought about what they know about you and in any event make you talk. The more conversation, the better, so if one question turns off the subject, let it occur, you may find more than you expected!

## WHAT IS YOUR FONDEST, UNREALIZED DREAM?

Thinking about your undiscovered dreams can help put you on the way towards what's to come. Other than that it's consistently critical to communicate enthusiasm for your partner's objectives. When you and your partner bond over your objectives for the future, you can have a superior thought of supporting each other to make those dreams a reality.

## WHAT'S YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT?

If you could have any activity on the planet, what might it be? What heritage do you trust you leave the world with? What was your most humiliating moment? As indicated by Earnshaw, it's critical to ask open-ended inquiries, for example, to show your partner that you're interested in them. Regardless of how long you've been together, there's continually something new to learn. Sharing fun stories from before, or trading thoughts on provocative questions can genuinely help you see different sides of your partner.

## HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ...?

Love maps are tied in with knowing your partner on a more profound level. When you've been with them for quite a while, it's difficult to accept that you know each and everything there is to know about them like their preferences or aversions. People are continually developing and evolving." So it's essential to continue posing questions about their attention and feelings. Don't only expect that you know what your partner wants or doesn't need since you feel like you definitely "know" them.



WHO WOULD YOU SAY BE YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS? WHAT ABOUT ENEMIES?

Who you decide to keep around you can say a ton regarding you. For example, it can show you the sort of characteristics you esteem most in your companionships. It's not just essential to know who your partner's companions are, and it's likewise a smart thought to know about the people who give them inconvenience. Show that you consider their kinships and their new moving relationships by being available to talk about them

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST SOURCE OF STRESS IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?

Stress is a significant piece of the entirety of our lives, opening up to your partner about the stress in yours and permitting them to vent to you can unite you. You will be unable to tackle each other's problems. But being an attentive person and giving them a compassionate shoulder to incline toward can extend your bond.

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST FEAR?

Answers to questions about your biggest fear, your present objectives, your preferred café, or your fantasy get-away may change after some time. To stay up with your partner's latest, it's OK to pose similar questions once more. "Answers may change with time as your relationship advances, so make it a highlight. Do numerous love maps after some time to remain current on one another's inward operations and heart musings," Cosgrove says.

Building love maps for your relationship is a continuous thing. It's entirely difficult to state that you know everything there is to know about an individual since people are continually evolving. If you manage to remain curious about your partner, you can continue learning new things for quite a long time.

Other questions to ask are:

- What was the best moment of your life before you met me?
- What was the most exceedingly awful moment of your life before you met me?
- What is the one thing you need to achieve to feel like your life was not squandered?
- What is your preferred activity when I'm nowhere to be found?
- What's one thing about you that would astonish me most if I knew it?
- Who has had the greatest effect on your life and why?
- Who is your legend, and why?
- What is your preferred trademark about me?
- What was the principal thing that attracted you to me?
- What causes you to feel safe?

- What is your biggest fear?
- Why do you love me?

You may be expected to know the appropriate responses, but what if you are incorrect? Loads of people THINK they know everything about their partners, but they are regularly off-base.

## SOME CRUCIAL THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR PARTNER IN A RELATIONSHIP

In many relationships, couples like to think they have each other made sense of following quite a while of being together, however, there still could be a long way to go! You'd be charmingly astonished to discover what your partner does or doesn't know about you.

Here are some key things you should know about your partner if you need to guarantee you know them.

Knowing the life story of your partner – both the great and the terrible parts is quite important. Many people have faith in love from the outset, and they state that it tends to be the beginning of something beautiful. However, many people took in their exercises the most challenging way possible and understood that love isn't sufficient to make a relationship last.

You additionally need different variables, and one significant one is to become more acquainted with your partner for who he/she is – and it doesn't stop there. You additionally need to completely acknowledge what you can find as you disentangle their life story, particularly the awful parts.

Another important thing is their preferred things – and people. Make a rundown of the things and people that can make them grin and discover it in your heart to cherish them. Significantly, you know about these significant bits of your significant other's life. Besides showing that you care, it's an insightful method of acknowledging the truth that her satisfaction can emerge from different sources – not merely from you and your relationship.

You also have to know the memories that make them cry. Understanding pity and how people keep tragic memories can help you become more acquainted with an individual better. By knowing what makes the love of your life cry, by attempting to contact them and make this

connection, you are making a shelter that they can generally rush to whenever they feel separated.

Recollect that relationships are not just about romance. Besides being a lover, you are likewise a companion, a dependable associate, and an ever-supportive partner.

Learn to know their dreams and yearnings as well. What are the things that they anticipate? What are the objectives and aspirations that they have chosen to seek? Know your partner better by valuing their courage and their certainty to confront the future without questions.

It's a moving thing to know how your partner sees herself ten to quite a while from now, and it's such a pleasing feeling, that you are with somebody who isn't hesitant to reach skyward and think beyond practical boundaries.

A rundown of the things and habits that bother your partner is one other pertinent thing you should know. Each individual has a rundown of things that bother them. Knowing each thing on your partner's rundown is hugely significant, with the goal that you can make the fundamental adjustments and maintain a strategic distance from the typical frivolous arguments.

However, much as could reasonably be expected, attempt to understand that you are two different people with extraordinary experiences. Making a compromise is one bit nearer to making a more grounded connection, particularly if you're new in the relationship.

In conclusion, in particular, you need to know if you are a part of your partner's vision of things to come. What is your career path five years from now? Do you frequently talk about your life together and how you wish to go through it with them?

Knowing your partner better and finding the things, habits, and occasions that contribute to how they see the world can have any kind of effect and can help your relationship endure the trial of time. Once more,

ask the correct questions and don't be reluctant to hear the appropriate responses.

Indisputably, you can without much of a stretch improve your marriage or serious relationship by putting additional time and exertion into getting within scoop about your partner. Simultaneously you have to find better approaches to fix a messed up marriage or a severe relationship that needs excitement and warmth.

When you and your partner have completed this study of marriage or serious relationship questions, trade them, and alternate examining and posing questions about everything. This is a chance to get the opportunity to 'know' each other better and construct a passionate marriage or serious relationship.

Make up your questions. asking each other questions alternatively yourself as an approach to showing your partner more subtleties is imperative. When the person in question answers mistakenly or offers a fragmented response, simply include the significant subtleties.





## DON'T LIE. BE HONEST AND OPEN

*H*onesty is, no doubt, a vital piece of living a happy, cultivated, and moral life. The ideas driving honesty are among the main things that kids are taught, and Honesty is empowered in pretty much every scene of life. Thomas Jefferson said "honesty is the primary part in the book of insight." The issue with Honesty is that in crude structure, it is a quest for the truth, and the truth is different for each living individual.

When it comes to being honest with your spouse, it is undoubtedly a significant part of marriage. But there is Honesty at the time and honesty that unleashes from a lifetime of living. The individual inside us all has many insider facts, and verifiably many ought not to be shared even with a spouse. Life discloses to us that even as unpredictably as we know an individual, there does not genuinely know anybody entirely but oneself! Look how many tales about evil grotesqueness that originate from people who carry on with appear to be brimming with Honesty and respect. It appears that Honesty is alright and acknowledged as long as the truth that we tell is too. Being honest and the whole idea of Honesty is a dumbfounding best-case scenario.

To shape a stable relationship with somebody and become emotionally cozy, you have to impart experiences and privileged insights to your partner that you don't impart to any other person. That sort of exceptional, cozy, profoundly private exchange requires the two players to be honest. Honesty includes giving exact data about occasions that are known or have just happened.

Honesty is coming clean as you know it about verifiable occasions that have just happened. Honest partners in a stable relationship don't knowingly give deception. However, being honest doesn't mean being inconsiderate, unpleasant, or forceful. It doesn't mean sharing things to hurt your partner or "holding nothing back." Discretion — utilizing decision making ability

about what to uncover and what not to uncover — is significant in any stable relationship.

So it's typically best not to assault your sweetheart's new attire or offer comments about another woman's "hotness." It isn't essential to share these feelings, and doing so may hurt your partner.

Who might argue that it is anything but a smart thought, to be honest? But many husbands and spouses look at dishonesty as a smart thought under specific conditions. The truth of the matter is that marriages are demolished by dishonesty, not by Honesty.

If a spouse doesn't give honest and open communication, trust can be subverted, and feelings of security can be decimated. At that point, you can't confide in the signs that are being sent, and you have no establishments on which to assemble a healthy relationship. Rather than developing together, you become separated. Now let's look at the different degrees of Honesty.

Emotional honesty reveals your emotional responses - both positive and negative - to your life's occasions, especially to your spouse's behavior. You need a consistent progression of exact information from one another. Honesty empowers a couple to make fitting adjustments to one another. Both of you are developing and changing with each new day, and you should continually conform to one another's changes. But if you're not getting exact data, you can't make the best possible adjustments. Honest feelings should be communicated and received. Grumblings must be heard and regarded.

Historical Honesty shows information about your history, especially occasions that show individual shortcomings or disappointment. Whatever humiliating experiences or genuine slip-ups are from quite a while ago, you must tell the truth with that person. The tendencies that drove you to accomplish something in your past are as yet a piece of your temperament, and the impacts of specific circumstances have formed what your identity

is. These things should be shared. Likewise, this implies you ought to uncover any past sexual relationships if you are going to understand one another.

Current honesty shows information about the occasions of your day. Give your spouse a schedule of exercises, with an extraordinary accentuation on those that may influence your spouse. In great marriages, couples become so reliant that sharing an everyday plan is necessary to coordinate exercises. When exercises are blameless, it's significant for your partner to understand what you do with your time. Ensure you're anything but difficult to track down in a crisis or when your partner simply wants to make proper acquaintance during the day.

Future honesty exhibits your attention and plans in regards to future exercises and targets. Do nothing without an eager agreement among you and your spouse. If you respect your spouse, you will need information and support from him/her on the choice and agreement on the heading.

With complete honesty, don't leave your spouse with a false impression about your attention, feelings, habits, likes, detests, personal history, day by day exercises, or plans for what's to come. Don't purposely keep individual information from your spouse.

## THE COMPLEX TRUTH ABOUT LYING TO YOUR PARTNER

The truth is, we as people always lie. Social researchers acknowledge it as a profoundly human quality. The most famous and socially capable among us are typically the greatest liars of all. The reasons we have for lying are nothing unexpected. They extend from honest to evil: We would prefer not to hurt the people we care about, we need to control the observation others have of us, we need to keep up or raise our status, we lie to secure our narrow-minded interests, and we need to control others. But as fundamental as lying is by all accounts to human creatures, believing relationships are additionally an essential human need, and as we as a whole know, lying annihilates trust.

Research shows that little lies make it simpler to lie. When you include self-justification, sometimes the lies become so enormous you begin to believe them yourself until you are caught and compelled to support the relationship-harming results that break down the bond you have and may, at last, cut off devastating the association.

Lies regularly start as self-protection but, for the most part, go to implosion. It isn't unexpected to feel that the outcomes of coming clean exceed the danger of lying, but in any event, when you don't get captured, a lie frequently harms the relationship.

I once worked with a client who went through more than a year in treatment, talking about his objective to locate an extraordinary partner, and keeping in mind that he had the option to meet a few great women; he continued asking why he was unable to feel near them. While we investigated different elements from his family and past relationships, he appeared to be genuinely sure that the problem was that he had quite recently not yet discovered "the one," and that he should keep looking.

I agreed this was conceivable, but I asked him to explain for what good reason he was so sure of that before we proceeded onward. He expressed to me that the women he was dating must be defective, because all he could do was lie and undermine them, and still they all affirmed to love him. As anyone might expect, he had never mentioned the lying and cheating and was in reality, likewise lying to his advisor. He had practically no understanding of the way that his lies and relationships with different women on the double were keeping him from finding what he truly needed, which was an extraordinary, close bond with one woman. It had never happened to him that these women didn't love him; they loved the individual he was claiming to be, and this was something he feared most.

If I asked him why he lied to them, he said he would not like to hurt them. If I asked why he precluded from treatment the way he was seeing different people without a moment's delay, he expressed that he would not like to look terrible. He thought the lies he was telling were self-saving when they were extremely self-undermining.

Presently, while it is anything but complicated to name this individual as basically narcissistic, the truth is that the vast majority's lies come from a comparative want to self-protect somehow or another, but are at last foolish, because lying, regardless of whether you don't get captured, keeps you from having something a great many people need, which is a credible connection and bond with another human being.

Does the goal make a difference? People frequently believe that their aims justify the lie. Lying not to offend another person is kinder than harming them, isn't that so? This kind of lying is a dangerous slant. My client above justified his lying to various women by saying that he would not like to hurt them, which in one respect was right; the higher truth, however, was that he needed to control their discernment and would not like to get discovered accomplishing something he knew was terrible enough that he expected to lie about it. His lie wasn't about their feelings; it was

about his expectation to manipulate and control. What about the lies of exclusion? What if you never really say something that isn't true? Is that an escape clause that lets you free? Suppose you lie or intentionally forget about relevant data to abstain from harming another person that, at last, is tied in with concealing your behavior. In that case, you can be guaranteed you have gone too far and are abusing the privilege your partner needs to make his/her own decision about whether your behavior is satisfactory or not.

I know life isn't simple, and there are perplexing purposes behind why people deceive. But it merits considering what these lies cost you as far as having a superior, more profound, more close connection. Perhaps not generally, honesty is the best approach, but that well-known adage is unquestionably more regularly directly than wrong.

Consequently, this will lead us to another significant part of being honest in a relationship, which is the idea of being open in a relationship.

## KEEPING AN OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR PARTNER

The success of a relationship depends on how well the couple is alluded to communicates and helps out one another. However, being honest takes a considerable amount of mental courage for many people. Taking everything into account, mentioning to people what you genuinely think and feel places you in a particularly frail state. For specific people, being helpless is the height of losing control. This can make it difficult for you to be open with your partner, whether you are hitched to them. A couple of people are significantly more pondering and spared about their feelings, and this can make it difficult for them to state what they truly think and feel.

In this way, we routinely develop fortifications around our spirits and shield ourselves from trusting in others. This can cause any number of problems in relationships, and a couple of couples are even divided because of an inability to be emotionally open with each other.

Relationships are never straightforward, meaning they take a tremendous amount of work. Still, if you push through all the difficulties and aggravation, you can find ways to emotionally communicate better with your partner. Relationships are connected to making a life with another person. As opposed to family, you choose to have that person in your life since you significantly love and care for them. Both of you have experienced tremendous and awful, and you profoundly regard the respect you have for one another.

Relationships take a vast amount of intricate work to make them work - I don't think I have ever heard of a perfect relationship. If you have, well, that individual is in all probability lying. Everyone has a couple of essential qualifications that they must have in a relationship. For a couple, honesty bests works, while for others, sex is above being wealthy. Notwithstanding the way that these are genuinely basic to have in a relationship, I believe

communication, especially open communication, is a huge factor in making a relationship truly work. If you and your partner know how to communicate with each other, by then, you have a stable relationship. It's an exceptional feeling knowing you can go to your partner with any concern or thought and know they are going to respect and identify with you. But being direct with your partner isn't everyone's strong suit. It will take practice and affirmation to get it on target.

It's fundamental to trust in each other to make your relationship last. Coming up next are some shown techniques for making sense of how to open up emotionally without overcompensating.



## HOW TO OPEN UP TO YOUR PARTNER IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Know your feelings first, When you know your feelings, it's simpler to identify how you'd feel in a specific circumstance. What are your body's sensations? What are the feelings related to those sensations? What are the circumstances or people who can make your heart hurt and your chest tight? What causes you to feel down?

If you experience difficulty identifying your sensations and feelings, utilize a word reference, or a speedy Google look and record all the words identified with feelings. When you're not mindful of each of those terms, you can't know how you'll feel when you open up emotionally.

One other method towards opening up to your partner is to have an open dialogue. You need to quit utilizing one-worded answers. It's difficult for specific people to be open when all they are getting is a "yes" or a "no" answer in a conversation. While single expressions are immediate, they don't generally clarify a great deal. What's more, that is the general purpose of being more open with your emotions.

You need to account for yourself, be defenseless, and not be hesitant to be open. I generally attempt to disclose this to my beau. I need our relationship to be open with criticism and discourse consistently. Communication is vital in any relationship, but if one individual is doing the majority of the emotional talking, it may very well be an uneven relationship, and that doesn't profit anybody.

Being open and powerless can be a terrifying thing. But it's smarter to do as such than to begin being angry and lament not doing it in any case. With these essential tips, you will be headed to an emotionally steady relationship.

You can also open up by talking about your past pains. While talking about exes isn't recommended in new relationships, there are circumstances

when you should talk about your past pains. Not exclusively will you show you confide in your partner, but you'll likewise help them understand your pain, behavior in specific circumstances, and your weakness.

Above all, it's a decent method to open up emotionally. Who knows, possibly you'll feel a liberating sensation once you share your previous pains instead of attempting to work them out yourself.

Abstain from playing a casualty, however. If you haven't recuperated from your past relationship yet, your partner probably won't believe you. Abstain from rebuffing your partner for the mix-ups that your exes made

To maintain an open relationship, be completely honest. There's no reason for opening up emotionally when you're not coming clean. If you doubt your partner's response, it's smarter to hold up until you know. However, if you believe your partner and they support you, guarantee you're 100% honest.

It's dubious, and you may even feel embarrassed from the outset. Grasp it. 100% honesty will make your relationship more grounded and breed trust. When you need to open up emotionally, even a harmless exaggeration can hurt your relationship, so reconsider before telling it.

To be open in your relationship, you have to stop laying blames on your partner. Finally, when you're figuring out how to open up emotionally, you should quit refusing to accept responsibility for the issues at hand. Nobody is liable for you being emotionally inaccessible – neither your folks nor your ex-partner.

They may adversely influence your emotional wellbeing, but you're the one in particular who can allow them to do as such. Rather than accusing others, face your fears and let them go.

Turning out to be open emotionally with your partner must be your decision too. If you open up because your partner lets you know along these lines, don't fault them. You generally have a decision.

Figuring out how to open up emotionally requires gradual steps, time, and exertion. In particular, it must be your own decision. If you feel pressure, let your partner know about it. Request that they give you time. Try not to open up in light of weight.

The exact opposite thing you need to manage is feeling liable for opening up emotionally with an inappropriate individual. Know who to trust in any case.

Ways not to get your partner to open up

You can get your partner to open up, but first, let's take a gander at what you ought not to do as you may perceive a portion of these behaviors and will need to stop them now.

- Getting angry with your partner and demanding that they mention to you what's going on
- Accusing your partner of keeping insider facts and making presumptions about what those privileged insights might be.
- Shouting and causing arguments just to send them to the brink thinking this will get them to talk.
- Making them feel liable and disliking them. If there is a mystery, they, as of now, feel liable enough without your help.
- Let your partner know that you love them unequivocally. That you know that they might be reluctant to reveal to you whatever it is that is annoying them but that you guarantee to tune in without judging or blowing up.
- Listen to your partner and hear what they need to state. Many people tune in but don't hear. Work on tuning in without interference, don't attempt to fill quiet or holes in the conversation. When you talk an excessive amount of you don't allow the other individual to be heard.

- Do not react protectively to an argument. Consider what has been stated, if your partner is correct, say as much.
- If your partner begins to open up, let them know you are tuning in and hearing them, avoid including your comments, and finish what they need to state. There are many times when we as a whole simply need to be heard.
- If you have to apologize, I will not joke about this. It tends to be so natural to state grief, just to do something very similar once more. Your partner needs to know that you are heartbroken, not trying to say the words to mollify them.

Knowing how to communicate your feelings is critical to having an emotionally satisfying relationship. Opening up and being defenseless makes closeness. But being able to share your feelings goes past saying, "I love you." Excellent communication likewise implies having the option to communicate when you're feeling emotions that are awkward like bitterness, disappointment, or outrage. Having the option to impart your feelings to your partner doesn't come effectively to everybody. But with some time and a little work, it is possible for anybody.

These are a portion of the means you can take to get your partner to open up. There are many others, but this is the beginning stage. Take these activities, and your partner will feel safe, you will expand on your communication, it's dependent upon you to make a move to save your relationship.



## ALWAYS BE PRESENT IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

A significant part of relating to someone else is remaining in the present with them and taking immediate impressions of their activities, words, and feelings, and afterward having the option to react unexpectedly. So regularly, we are urgently worried about what impression we are making on others, we have minimal inner space for taking in any new impression of them.

Accordingly, we become restricted in our view of them. For this situation, we limit our recognition by envisioning them to receive us, and it might have nothing to do with what is going on with them. It is likewise challenging to remain right now with someone else if we now have an all-around shaped previously established inclination of what their identity is—our pre-shaped mental representation channels how we decipher any new impressions of them.

Our minds arrange our experience by bringing the past relationship to a new experience. The goal is to place new data into old classes rapidly and frequently pass up on the chance for another experience. To keep this programmed work from totally commanding how we take in new impressions, we need to put forth a conscious attempt not to do as such. If we can't frame new affiliations, we stall out in tedious experiences and frequently wind up stuck in the usual, worn-out clashes with people.

When you love somebody, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How would you be able to love if you are not there?

You know that feeling you get when you're talking to your partner or spouse, and they don't appear to be "there?" By that, I mean, a piece of them is elsewhere, and it's not with you. You may ponder where their mind is, or feel offended or hurt that they're not entirely present in your organization. Sometimes our mind meanders, which is normal, and it can happen when we're with somebody we care about who's talking to us. Still,

if we are completely present when we're with the individual we love, our spotlight and attention are on them, particularly when they're addressing us. However, it can be anything but difficult to dismiss that in our relationship or marriage since when you've been along with somebody for some time, you can get careless or even sluggish when it comes to giving them the total attention they merit.

Being present in your relationship is urgent to its prosperity as it permits you to be at the time with your partner. Not exclusively does being present affect your relationship's life span, but it impacts your satisfaction too. Being present gives you a degree of connection expected to grasp and perceive your love for another, and likewise to help remind you of the reasons in which you love this person.

Presence is the ability to show up and be there for somebody without embedding an individual plan. This implies allowing our gatekeeper to guard so we can give the other individual access. Presence can be difficult but fundamental expertise for successful relationships.

Loving presence plays a critical factor in offering emotional help to another. Analysts have just discovered that unsupportive behavior during a contention, such as making light of the significance of the problem, demanding after recommendations or offering spur of the moment advance, is a reliable indicator of future relationship distress.

Sometimes we have to talk about a problem without attempting to tackle it. A few problems can't be tackled. Sometimes we simply need somebody to hold our hand at the memorial service and rest in a seat close to us in the clinic bed. Sometimes we simply need to feel somewhat less alone and somewhat less apprehensive on the planet

The ability to focus on the present moment—or be with what is—without being judgmental or receptive is alluded to as mindfulness. Luckily for Dan, mindfulness is an ability that can be improved.

The term mindfulness initially originated from one factor of the Buddhist Noble Eightfold way. Still, otherworldly specialists everywhere throughout the world have been rehearsing the craft of being here now for centuries. Similarly, as competitors do physical activities without anyone else to turn out to be better at playing sports with others, mindfulness specialists build up their capacity to be present through yoga, reflection, thought, or qigong to be completely present with others.

Mindfulness practices include concentrating the mind on a solitary point, such as the breath, a melody, a sluggish movement, or even the perfect inside. When the mind strays (as it does), the expert mostly sees that and returns to the core interest point.

That is practically it, but these straightforward practices give a heap of mental and emotional advantages. Exploration contemplates showing that mindfulness helps for tension and sadness, chronic drug use, and even Borderline Personality Disorder. Mindfulness helps for relationships as well.

There's real artistry to embracing the here and now, and it's not as simple as it appears. There's continually another thing to contemplate, and that can genuinely remove us from the moment. Being present is significant in each part of life, but it very well may be especially significant when it goes to our romantic relationships

So how would you be more "there " when you're with your partner or spouse? You put forth a conscious attempt to remain completely present in their life and treat them with love and respect.



HERE ARE A FEW DIFFERENT WAYS TO DO THAT:

Always take a nice look at your partner. This necessary demonstration can help remind you of what attracted you to your partner in the first place. Take a look at one another; offer a moment where you're centered around each other. Look into your partner's spirit, and permit them to investigate yours. Eye to eye connection is the right type of closeness, try it out.

Set aside an effort to tune in to your partner. Try not to consider what you should state straight away, but be present and focus on the words being said. Sometimes it's the most straightforward motions that can help the individual over the room feel esteemed and heard.

Having alone time too is crucial. Focus on it to invest energy alone—merely you two, regardless of whether it's an end of the week escape, going through a day at the nearby historical center, or having a cookout at the recreation center, set aside an effort to grasp your love and commitment to each other.

Closeness comes in many shapes and sizes, but clasping hands while strolling down the road, embracing each other as you sit tight for the train, or essentially grinning from over the room, would all be able to be a significant type of closeness. It's a method to tell your partner that you're considering them and that you look for closeness.

Offer space, regardless of whether it's sharing a home, sharing a taxi, or sharing your heart. Be respectful, be benevolent, and let your partner in. Permit yourself to be powerless. Permit yourself to trust. With self-introduction comes incredible connections. Opening up can sometimes be difficult, so do it when you're prepared, but know that your relationship's advantages will be gratifying.

A significant piece of being present is mindful. Be accommodating of your partner. Be mindful; know. Be cautious with the heart and feelings of

your other half. Thinking about each other will likewise develop your bond and further fortify your relationship.

Focusing on someone else isn't just about a title or a ring—it's not just about having somebody call your individual. Commitment is tied in with being there for the defining moments, the tough situations, and the evenings with the sofa, a container of pizza, and Netflix. Appreciate the bond in which you have manufactured, and sustain it. Deal with love, all things considered, as effectively lost as it is found.

When your partner or spouse is talking to you, stop whatever else you're doing, and give them your full focus.

If your mind begins to wander when your partner or spouse is talking to you, look into their eyes, and feel the love you have. That will associate you to them in a significant manner, rather than underestimating them.

## WHY ATTENTION IS IMPORTANT IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Things being what they are, why do we give such a vast amount of significance to attention in a relationship? Is focusing on detail in relationships that important all things considered? Indeed, it is! Also, in light of current circumstances as well!

You most likely think the entire world is in the center, similar to a photo. It isn't. Spot your finger a couple of inches from here, center around it, and attempt to peruse the following sentence. You can't. The fovea, the focal point of the eye, is a little locale where we see forcefully, and the mind imagines that the rest is in the center also. Attention is that way, as well. Consider it an electric lamp or a light if you're British. You just observe what it is pointing at.

We frequently swing it fiercely around, as though we are in timberland on a moonless night, checking for branches, gullies, predators, and prey. What's more, we're not entirely in charge of it either, as any individual who has attempted to contemplate will bear witness to. It seems as though another person likewise has hold of the electric lamp handle, and continues taking command.

Our language mirrors this nonstop difference in the center. "My attention was gotten by... ." "Let me cause you to notice... ." "Focus!"

That is, from numerous points of view, something worth being thankful for. The smoke caution demands attention in any event when immersed in "Round of Thrones," similarly as we see movement in our fringe vision.

What's more, what we focus on isn't just occasions in the outside world; it's frequently inside. The past or the future engrossed us, and we changed our attention to our faculties sufficiently only to abstain from strolling into the furnishings.

Presently apply this to your relationships with others, regardless of whether colleagues or your lover. If you're not focusing, you won't see them. If you're consistently exchanging attention, you will just observe them a bit. When you give them your complete attention, they become, for that time, your whole world. You recognize the truth about them, however, obviously separated by your beliefs and biases. What's more, this other individual, regardless of whether a checkout assistant or your lover, can feel your look, will react to your attention, because our responses are a lot social.

It is just through attention that a relationship exists by any means. If you give no attention, that individual doesn't exist for you. When you stroll with somebody, you focus on pace and bearing, in case you become two separate bodies in the group; thus, it is in a relationship: it is your precise attention to one another that holds it together and makes it genuine.

When that attention becomes shared complete attention, a sacred space is made, that unique method of being together that we have as of late expounded on. By not focusing on past occasions or future concerns, you can be present to yourself and your partner. When your mind isn't topped off with concerns and your attention isn't coordinated somewhere else, you will experience the enchantment and totality of association with another.

Toward the day's end, the whole custom of being a couple is justified, despite all the trouble when you both feel the love for one another. If that is feeling the loss, the ceremonial beginnings are getting useless, and the relationship begins to bite the dust. Sometimes it's the start of the end, and sometimes it is the warning which when paid attention to resuscitates a relationship.

There are billions of us, and our lives could become mixed up in that disarray, but the way that our partner sees our lives, records it, lives it with us makes the entire thing beneficial. It likewise props the communication in a relationship up.

All in all, if in the midst of all that you feel like you're not getting enough attention from your sweetheart, what's even the point? So if you feel that you can't concentrate on your partner, he is things you ought to do.

## HOW TO GIVE YOUR PARTNER THE NEEDED ATTENTION

Learn How to Listen. Listening is more than hearing. It's body language, head gesturing, posing questions, focusing (not being on your telephone), and showing you are occupied with the conversation. At that point, it's making what you heard one stride farther and following up on your conversation. Being a decent audience can transform a healthy relationship into a tremendous one.

Asking questions is a primary method to be more mindful. Get some information about their day. Inquire as to whether they need anything when you get up to go to the kitchen. Ask how they're feeling. Ask how their clubs or employment are going. Inquire as to whether they talked to their family. Simply pose questions that show you're focusing and that you're keen on their lives.

Accomplishing something they've always wanted to do is another way to give your partner the much-needed attention. Possibly they've for the longest time been itching to go to the zoo to take care of the giraffes or visit the neighborhood craft exhibition hall that everybody raves about. Whatever it is, treat them to it! Cause them to feel unique since they are!

Achieve more things together. If you're an exercise center rodent, but your partner's a city sprinter, pick a day when they run with you, and you go to the recreation center with them. Check whether you can press get-togethers into your day. The additional time you spend together, the more possibilities you must be mindful, to show enthusiasm, to be affectionate, and to become acquainted with your partner shockingly better.

Bedroom Attention is also quite important. Get some attractive new underwear or a fun new toy and let them know you're prepared to joy them! There's nothing hotter than being mindful in the room, and your partner will thank you for it.

To meet your partner's needs you also need to focus on their body. Tune in to their breathing and focus on their body movements when you engage in sexual relations. Notice when they get a hairstyle. Contribute somewhat more when you notice they're feeling depleted or wiped out. Show care and concern when they limp. Have a delicate and thinking about their disposition and body.

Chances are if your partner could utilize some attention; at that point, a little gift will go far. Snatch their preferred container of Scotch or wine, or get them a gift card to their preferred store. This little signal will show that you're pondering them, regardless of whether you've been excessively occupied of late.

There's no reason for overlooking commemorations, birthday celebrations, and unique events. You can place the dates into your telephone and get vast amounts of reminders. Go a bit farther and put in different exceptional events, similar to a year at their particular employment, the commemoration of when you got you ahead of everyone else, or their preferred pet's birthday.

Getting into your spouse's Interests is also quite important towards meeting his or her needs. If you despise sports, you don't need to become a fan out of nowhere, but you may think it's enjoyable to go to a game together or have a close following get-together. If there's a show they like, watch it as well, so you can talk about it. Learn about what they love so you can pose questions or get them things they may require. It will go far to help your partner to feel known and understood.

## SOLUTIONS FOR THE LACK OF ATTENTION TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP

When speaking with your partner, ensure you have your partner's complete attention. This implies not expecting your partner is listening since you're talking. Instead, check-in: "Is this a decent time to talk?" Especially if it is important to you or the relationship. If you, as the audience, are centered around something, and your partner starts talking, you can repeat and state, "I truly need to hear what you're stating, and I'm engaged/diverted by this. Would I be able to wrap this up extremely snappy and afterward talk to you about this? I need to give you your complete attention, and I'm diverted at this moment." FYI, if you settle on an agreement like this but don't finish, your partner won't trust your statement. So finish. Remember, both the speaker and the audience have duties in keeping the conversation spotless and bright.

If your relationship is devoured by heftiness, plunk down with your partner and investigate how your time is spent. Check whether there are little chances to set aside a few minutes for emotional connection. I have proposed a few ceremonies here: [7 Daily Rituals Intentional Couples Use to Cultivate Lasting Love](#).

For attention weakness when it comes to stress, I would recommend having a day by day stress decreasing conversation, just as planning a State of the Union gathering when the two partners have vitality so you can hear each other and stir together to think of a solution.

If gadgets are a problem, read this article: [Four Common Solvable Problems in Relationships](#). Gadgets have become a significant problem in my life. Hence, I read [Digital Minimalism](#) and experienced an attention diet. Knowing that my attention is constrained, I need to ensure I center it around essentials most in my life.



Keep records of another experience with one another. Frequently in relationships with kids, the youngsters get a wide range of new exercises while the grown-ups get the daily schedule of the day by day life. Get the innocent interest and perkiness into your relationship. Investigate new pieces of one another when you take a stab at moving, painting, another exercise class, wine sampling, or even better approaches for communicating love, and so on.

Attention is the essential food and water of a living and breathing relationship. Attention is how we support and feed. Attention is what we require and pine for. Without attention, no relationship, regardless of how solid, can get by for long—the underlying foundations of connection just psychologist and whither. Attention is the most fundamental type of love. Through it, we favor and are honored.

So now, while you, despite everything, can, while we're as yet capable, go love your love, focus on him, touch her cheek. Look into his eyes. Get some information about her work. Ask him how his mom is. Try not to pause. Life is short, and time swiftly cruises by.

Love and life are complicated and testing. Furthermore, hence, it's essential to devote the little moments we have to the most critical relationship of our lives.



## DISAGREEMENTS ARE NORMAL AMONGST EACH OTHER

Quarrels and fights are important to keep a developing relationship more beneficial. Every other couple now and then engages in quarrels. If somebody has never battled with his spouse, then he has unquestionably missed one fascinating part of his purported developed relationship. Fights followed by a progression of influence and different methods for inducement hold particular importance for a relationship. Many times such little fights lead to frivolous conflicts which later gets forgotten about by the couple and at different times it very well may be justified to show up at a typical agreement. In such cases, it's smarter to just settle on a truce. This is what's standard out of a developing relationship regardless of whether there emerges some difference in the thoughts.

The conflicting thoughts for a couple aren't something exceptionally remarkable. It surely can't be that one be the equal representation of his spouse when talking about thoughts or suppositions. Everybody has their personality and uniqueness, the opportunity of thought fluctuates from individual to individual. It doesn't make a difference if the concerned people are as of now in a developing relationship; arguments will undoubtedly happen when there is a difference in conclusion over a specific subject.

It's a confusion of the people, which causes them to believe that couples associated with a developing relationship ought never to have any disagreements whatsoever. A young couple feels their romantic connection is to keep going forever, so they get off watched after confronting any circumstances like minor fights or warmed arguments. This way, both the spouses shroud their feelings to keep away from such a quarrel. They might be directly in their specific manners, but the inquiry is if theirs is an adult relationship, will it get influenced by any argument or disagreement.

Conflict in a relationship might be characterized as any sort of disagreement, including an argument, or a progressing arrangement of disagreements, for instance, about how to go through cash. Strife can be amazingly stressful, but it can likewise act to 'eliminate any confusion air', surfacing issues that need conversation.

Conflicts and disagreements may bring about us losing control, and they may likewise emerge because we have lost control over something different. At work, we may attempt to control our outrage and abstain from making statements we may lament. At home, lamentably, we are considerably more prone to direct frightful sentiments toward others thus. There are additionally more reluctant to be others around who can intercede, and disagreements along these lines rapidly heighten in a manner that probably won't occur at work.

This implies struggle in a relationship can quickly turn out to be terrible, and extremely close to home.

Unfortunately, when we are near people, we regularly know how best to hurt them. Out of frustration, that might be actually what we need to do, however much we think twice about it later.

If you're similar to many people, when you think you are correct and your partner isn't right - you may not say the words, 'You're off-base!' - but your signals and manner of speaking might be quite obvious. How may you handle this differently? Why might you need to?

Have you at any point heard the adage, 'Would you like to be correct or would you like to be hitched?' There is a ton of insight into this platitude. The more you think your partner isn't right, the more you tell your partner they're off-base or utilize related motions or manner of speaking, the more you harm your relationship and lessen the odds of connection, respect, trust, and closeness. Doesn't sound so great, isn't that right?

One of the most important intentions for helping keep a healthy relationship is to 'move in the direction of' your partner, particularly when

you would prefer not to. What does 'move in the direction of' mean?

## HOW HAPPY COUPLES DEAL WITH DISAGREEMENTS

Every couple differs from one another. The impeccable similarity is beyond the realm of imagination, but reasonably working; however, inconsistency is. The difference between a happy couple and a troubled couple is how they handle their disagreements. Consequently, to become and be successful in our connections, we should embrace sound adapting procedures for managing our differences.

The following are the absolute best strategies cheerful couples handle disagreements:

They attack their disagreements, not one another. Disagreements are beautiful, and arguments are as well. These are characteristic, centered responses to an individual's choices or behavior. But when disagreements and arguments snowball into worldwide assaults on the other individual, and not on their choices or behavior, this means something is wrong. For instance: "They didn't call me when they said they would because they overlooked, but because they're a repulsive, pathetic, abhorrent individual."

In any event, when it's challenging to think obviously without giving it much thought, you need to take a full breath and remember that your partner is in your group. Continuously support each other, in any event, when you disagree. Try not to take your stress out on one another. Maintain your emphasis on the problematic disagreement and it together by talking it out and arriving at a compromise.

Both parties taking responsibility shows how mature couples can be with conflicts in their relationships. When you refuse to take responsibility in each relationship disagreement, all you're truly doing is accusing your partner. You're stating, as a result, "The problem is never me, it's consistently you." This forswearing of responsibility just heightens the argument, because there's a complete breakdown of communication.

So assume liability for your activities. Assume liability for your relationship – the great times and the terrible. Work with your partner. Communicate. Accusing them is a copout that achieves nothing. It is possible that you both take equivalent responsibility for problems both of you experience together, or the problems will possess both of you.

Happy couples also practice purposeful communication amidst conflicts. Your partner isn't a mind reader. Offer your musings openly. Give them the information they need as opposed to anticipating that they should know everything. The more that remaining parts are implicit, the more noteworthy the hazard for problems. Begin imparting plainly. Try not to attempt to guess what they might be thinking, and don't attempt to peruse yours. Most problems, of all shapes and sizes, inside a relationship, start with broken communication.

Likewise, don't tune in so you can answer – tune in to understand. Open your ears and mind to your partner's interests and assessments without judgment. Take a gander at things from your partner's point of view just as your own. Attempt to imagine their perspective. Regardless of whether you don't understand precisely where they're coming from, you can, in any case, respect them. So turn your body towards them, look at them without flinching, turn off the PC, and set aside your telephone. Doing so exhibits that you need to communicate with your partner and hear what they need to state; this fortifies such a supportive environment that is pivotal for compromise.

They are happy to make sacrifices for one another. The most joyful private bonds are attached with true love, and true love includes attention, mindfulness, control, exertion, and having the option to think about somebody and sacrifice for them, always, in endless negligible, little, unsexy ways consistently. You put your arms around them and love them notwithstanding, in any event, when they do not see things your way. Also, they do likewise for you.

If you genuinely need to know what a cheerful, stable relationship is, it's one where two people get up each morning and state, "This is justified, despite all the trouble. You are justified, despite all the trouble. I am cheerful you are in my life." It's about real sacrifice. It's tied in with knowing that a few days you should do things you hate to make the one you love to grin, and feeling completely enchanted to do as such.

One other way is that happy couples are focused on managing disagreements, decidedly. Frequently it very well may be least demanding to run from a disagreement, particularly if you're not a fierce individual necessarily. But remember, this isn't about you or whether you feel like managing your differences. It's about what your relationship needs to develop and flourish over the long haul; so put these needs in front of your own. The two partners must be focused on managing their disagreements, since running from them will just make matters more difficult to manage not far off.

One of the best instruments couples can use to facilitate the way toward managing disagreements is utilizing positive language. Relationships prosper when the two people can share their deepest feelings and contemplations positively. One viable technique for doing this during an argument is to give a valiant effort to abstain from utilizing "you" and attempt to utilize "I." This makes it a lot simpler to communicate feelings and a lot harder to the other individual incidentally.

The establishment of love is to let those we care about be proudly themselves and not to misshape them to accommodate our vain thoughts of who they ought to be. Else we begin to look all starry eyed at just with our dreams, and in this manner pass up a great opportunity totally on their true excellence. So spare your relationship from unnecessary stress. Rather than attempting to change your partner, give them your support and become together, as people.



Each marriage has struggled too, which is why knowing how to communicate with your spouse is so important.

There are many zones in a marriage where you're just not going to concur. Here is a couple:

- One of you wants to have kids (or X number of children), while different says they're not prepared or are content with the current number of children.
- One of you wants sex unquestionably more regularly than the other.
- You need to bring up your kids Baptist, while your spouse wants them to be raised Catholic.
- Your spouse is remiss about housework and once in a while does their offer until you annoy, touching off outrage.
- One of you is a saver with cash and the other is a high-roller.
- Or one of you wants to progress in the direction of a more straightforward and moderate sort of life, and the other doesn't.

Problems in marriage are unavoidable. The inquiry is — would you be able to stay fulfilled in your marriage regardless of differences? Will your marriage flourish when there are differences between you?

The key is to work it out and grow up persistently. Acknowledge the problem and talk about it. Your love for one another doesn't need to be overpowered by your differences.

In shaky marriages, elephants are probably going to murder the relationship. Rather than adapting, the couple gets gridlocked. You have a similar conversation, again and again, settling nothing. You're wasting your time. Also, since you're gaining no ground, you both feel more disappointed, hurt, or dismissed. When this occurs, resentment moves in and humor and affection leave – as well as effortlessness and enthusiasm.

Problems in marriage will occur. How you address them is up to you; in this way, this takes us to how to best communicate with your partner during arguments and disagreements.

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PARTNER WHEN YOU DISAGREE

The first way is to plainly define yourself. To characterize yourself implies you have more profound mindfulness and understanding of your beliefs, wants, needs, and wants. Marriage is an incredible spot to clarify these things in your life – for the most part since that is how marriage is structured.

You live with someone else who has their perspective on how things ought to be, much the same as you. For instance, in your group of a starting point, tables may fill in as extraordinary spots to store heaps of mail, magazines, and the child's beautiful art. But your spouse's group of starting points believes tables are incredible spots to have supper together, so they should be liberated from a mess.

Neither one of these ways is fundamentally "right," merely different. You are permitted to live life how you pick, but so is your spouse.

To experience effective communication with your spouse, treating your spouse with respect is quite crucial. One of the first things I find in couples nearly marital breakdown is an absence of respect. When you arrive at a point where you do not, at this point like one another, you're in a tough situation.

Unfortunately, we frequently treat regular outsiders with more respect than people in our home. Respect is one of the key elements to a successful and upbeat marriage — respect for everyone around you, and most importantly, respect for yourself.

Talk before you are irate and concur with a procedure. Managing strife requires a commitment from both of you. Talk heretofore about how you might want to manage disagreements, and concur that you will help each other.

You may think that it's helpful to talk about how you carry on when you are furious, and support each other to manage that. For instance, if one of you loses control rapidly, it might be helpful for the other to propose holding until some other time to talk.

Consistent apology is another thing. You may feel that you were morally justified. You may even have been morally justified.

Being set up to apologize for the way that your partner feels, however, will go far towards guaranteeing that they feel they have been heard, and that you understand their interests. This is particularly true if, despite your best goals, you wound up yelling at one another.

Saying 'sorry' doesn't mean you need to acknowledge that you weren't right.

It implies saying that you are heartbroken that there was a disagreement, and you are grieved that your partner is vexed and that you are focused on finding a route forward that works for you both.

A difference of supposition or any minor fight is required for a decent and developed relationship as it encourages the couple to become acclimated to the sentiments and behaviors of their partners. But it ought to likewise be remembered that the disagreements ought to be taken with a positive temper, it ought not to insult your partner nor should you feel annoyed by the restriction. You need not be quiet when you feel you have a different conclusion with your partner; you can feel free to tell him what your contemplations are. A minor disagreement followed by a legitimate conversation lastly excusing the differences is the indication of a developing relationship.

In any case, don't begin fighting with your partner to term it as a developed relationship if you have genuinely nothing to grumble and you share similar suppositions with your partner. Learning to have substantial disagreements will permit your growing dating relationship to go higher than ever. It's when the disagreement grows into a destructive fight that it

isn't acceptable. Keep things non-emotional and permit each other to voice their conclusion and feelings. You would prefer the honesty of this sort of relationship than the trickery of whatever else. Developing a dating relationship is based on two people who know how to fight well.



## DO SOMETHING NICE FOR YOUR PARTNER

It's convenient to take for granted the person you're nearest to and who cares about so much. The deep intimacy that an intimate bond brings with it ensures that you feel so relaxed with your partner that you don't feel like you have to breathe air. Such airs may also be helpful, though, because it means that you show your partner the same compassion that you would show to a stranger. You wouldn't interrupt someone you don't know very well, be critical, use rough language, or be intrusive and intrusive. You dress up whenever you meet someone for the first time and listen to your appearance so that you can be viewed in a socially appropriate way. Why, then, do you think you can violate the social niceties with your partner?

Research on happy couples proposes that having the option to show your actual self contributes to a decent relationship as it mirrors the closeness of your feelings. However, there might be limits to precisely how much you should toss aside the standards of social show. For instance, if you're feeling horrible because of something that occurred at work, is it a smart thought to let your disappointments out on your partner? If you went through the entire day stifling your annoyance toward your chief or associates, why is it at that point alright to vent the entirety of that obnoxiousness out on the individual who you love, and who loves you?

In this way, treating your partner with as much sagacity as you treat your associates, or others as a rule, is by all accounts advantageous in managing this key region of a couple's relationship.

We can utilize these 10 tips on how to be a nicer individual with the individual you love the most:

## WAYS YOU CAN START BEING NICER TO THE ONE YOU LOVE

Put forth an attempt to understand your partner's needs. Political aptitude, as shown via Carnes, helps men, at any rate, coexist better with their partners to the extent that conflict can take away from a couple's fulfillment. Taking a page from the political abilities playbook implies that you take a gander at your relationship with your partner as worth your time and vitality.

To respect your partner's feelings, you have to respect your partner's limits. You could never rudely request that a colleague share exceptionally close to home subtleties. Your partner may have a few territories that the person in question wishes to keep hidden. Try not to go where you're not welcomed.

There is no motivation to be inconsiderate or vulgar with your partner, despite the fact that you feel that you can act naturally."Keep up probably a portion of the decent behaviors with your partner that you would when you're out of the house, including social graces and by and large disposition. Be cautious with the words you use. That political ability file included social sagacity, or knowing the correct comments to other people. You don't need to alter yourself very vigorously in your nearest relationships, but it's as yet important to express your communication such that it isn't terrible or disrespectful.

Recollect that the relationship is a two-way road. You might want to, and most likely to be sure expect, that your partner will treat you with graciousness and respect. Once more, coming back to the idea of political expertise, some portion of coexisting with others is having the option to see yourself comparable to them. How would you need your partner to see you? Probably, you want to be treated with thoughtfulness and a smidgen of graciousness, and in this way, you ought to show a similar degree of consideration.



To be nice to your partner, you have to know that your partner might be as stressed as you seem to be. Work-family conflict as far as job commitments and over-burden are genuine contenders with your capacity to make the most of your partner. It might feel normal to consider yourself the stressed-out one, but it's conceivable your partner gets back home with a comparative degree of tension. If you can be a sounding board for your partner's disappointment, this can go far toward both of you feeling ready to take the outside world. It doesn't hurt to offer help on days or weeks that are especially stressful for your partner.

Try not to make suspicions about what your partner is feeling. That social mindfulness Carnes contemplated incorporates having the option to read people well, and to do this, you have to keep up a receptive outlook toward what others are encountering. You wouldn't profess to know what an outsider is thinking, and despite the fact that you know your partner well indeed, be fit to be shocked at what you realize.

It's extraordinary to feel that you don't need to put your open face on while at home, but from time to time your partner may value you getting spruced up, regardless of whether it's only an apathetic Sunday evening. It's especially important that you do as such if the Sunday evening incorporates a visit from your partner's family. Showing respect to the others your partner thinks about might be similarly as important as showing you care about how your partner sees you.

Always expecting your partner to be honest, which is also another nice gesture you can show to your partner. Is it accurate to say that you are suspicious of what your partner is doing when you're not together, or do you feel that your partner sometimes conceals for a mix-up or for spending a lot on garments? This causes it difficult for your partner to feel acknowledged and can prompt your being seen as conniving yourself.

Stop yourself before you state something you'll wish you could reclaim. When a few words are stated, they can't be implied, despite the fact that it's

simpler to apologize to your partner than to somebody you don't know that well. All things considered, if you practice your political aptitudes in the home, you'll abstain from making an excessive number of those inappropriate or excessively unforgiving comments.

## COMPLIMENT YOUR PARTNER

A pleasant utterance of applause and profound respect one regularly terms as 'compliment' appears to leave stock once wedded. Prior to marriage, there's no deficiency, in reality the stock is unlimited. At that point why did the lack once hitched?

Among many things one underestimates in a marriage, extraction of compliments is one of them – compliments not just stop to pour, they stop to sprinkle through and through. Marriage, particularly in our nation appears to give permission to underestimate one another. When couples change or quit concentrating on the better subtleties like showering compliments, offering love and thanks, they once used to, one may feel one's partner has changed – in spite of the fact that they naturally continue as before.

Because one is hitched doesn't mean one gets careless with things. A couple may quit complimenting one another, but the moment a third individual showers a few compliments, they feel euphoric. How unexpected! It's human to feel cheerful when complimented. All relationships develop through compliments - extra-conjugal included. Henceforth when couples having experienced it with one another, stop the training once wedded, feel at the head of the world when complemented by a pariah.

Compliments can have a positive influence on your marriage. When you offer genuine encouragement and compliments to your spouse, a few things occur. Your spouse's self-assurance increments, just as your own self-esteem. The companionship among you is reinforced and you make an upbeat moment for you two to share. When you offer your spouse a compliment, you show your thankfulness and cause them to feel esteemed

and esteemed. You likewise center around the positive rather than the negative, which is something each marriage needs.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FLATTERY AND COMPLIMENTS

It is important that your compliments are true and legitimate. When they aren't, your comments transform into adulation, which is false or dishonest applause. Sweet talk is typically received with cynicism and is regularly seen as being manipulative. As it were, sweet words are frequently simply used to get something you need from the individual you are complimenting. It is about you, not them. A genuine compliment is said with the center reason to cause another person to feel great.

Probably the greatest effect of compliments is that it strengthens behavior. So if there is something you compliment, it is probably going to get your spouse to do it more. Respected marriage analyst, Dr. John Gottman, attests that in great marriages, compliments (and great connections when all is said in done) need to dwarf reactions by at any rate five to one. Fortunately, if you are low on your reminder, it's a simple fix.

## TIPS FOR COMPLIMENTING YOUR SPOUSE

- Use "I" rather than "you." For example, state, "I welcome that you cleaned the house" rather than "You worked superbly cleaning the house."
- Use consistent non-verbal communication when you compliment. Grin, look and talk in a warm and genuine manner.
- Be specific. For instance, it's smarter to state "That shading draws out your beautiful eyes" as opposed to "You look beautiful."
- Compliment your spouse's character too. Comment on your spouse's pleasantness, insight, consideration, and enormous heart.
- If you are the beneficiary of a compliment, take it in generous. Try not to act naturally censoring or deny your partner's point of view on something positive or great.
- Don't have a concealed plan or camouflage your compliment in an analysis. Your compliments must be immediate and earnest. Try not to state, "I'm happy you are at long last on time." Say, "I love that you showed up so expeditiously."

At last, keeping the parity on the positive side of the relationship is only a consistent stream of little demonstrations of love. Sure a terrific motion is nice now and again, but it's the easily overlooked details that truly matter. Try not to avoid those day by day compliments; they'll wind up being the magic that binds everything.

## MAKE YOUR SPOUSE FEEL SPECIAL AGAIN

Focusing on your spouse to feel special and among your many relationships is an important and deliberate decision that takes work. However, this is the most important work that will serve to keep your family solid and stable.

Always Keep up the "Enchantment" in Marriage. Continue saying "I love you." These three little words are amazing! Barely any people, if any, feel worn out on hearing that they are loved. When you state "I love you" give a valiant effort to be giving your spouse your complete consideration. Ensure you mean it when you state it!!

Give veritable, important assertions normally. "Well, your hair smells terrific" might be fitting, but assertions as "You accomplish such a great deal to keep our family working. I can never thank you enough for everything you do" are all the more impressive and important for causing your spouse to feel special. Certifications come in all shapes and sizes: from verbal attestations given face to face, to phone message or email messages to notes and cards.

Getting away together is another way to make him or her feel special. Same thought as the customary night out on the town noted previously. An excursion with your spouse will give you more opportunity to concentrate on each other and will give you chances to revive the romance in your life!

To make your partner feel special, surprise your spouse once in a while. For instance, seize your spouse from work and accomplish something you know they would appreciate. (Make certain to check with your spouse's chief – if they have one!) Give gifts or roses at absolutely surprising times.

Purchase your spouse roses or gifts. Gifts don't need to be excessive, but ought to be basic tokens of how special your spouse is to you. Keep these gifts individual, as opposed to handy!

If you travel, attempt to communicate with your spouse regularly while you are away. Calls are ideal, trailed by voice messages and messages. If you need to keep your spouse feeling special, don't offer remarks like "This is the best time I've at any point had in my life" regardless of whether it is. "I truly miss you" works much better!



## GIFTING- A GOOD WAY TO BE NICE TO YOUR PARTNER

Gifts have consistently been an important part whenever you wish to build up a solid and loving relationship. This is because gifts will in general offer various advantages planned for causing your relationship to get more grounded and keep going forever. While most relationships are novel in their own particular manner, it's not possible for anyone to deny the effect that gifts have when it comes to making a more grounded bond and keeping up further connections with each other. If you are still in question on whether to get her or him a neckband or some other gift, here are a portion of the upsides of gift-giving that will make you alter your perspective totally.

Gift-giving builds your reputation. From the moment you choose to begin dating truly, your social notoriety will consistently be out of your hands. This is because most women will in general offer nearly everything with their companions who in the end share with their sweethearts. In this manner, a gift once in a while can go far in building your notoriety since they are generally connected with well-meaning goals. You ought to consider offering a gift on occasion if you need to keep yourself in great books with each and every individual who partners with the individual that you are dating.

There is appreciation in gift-giving as well. In a relationship, it is in every case better to help your significant other to remember how you love and welcome them now and again. With a gift, you can accomplish this without fundamentally starting to perspire. This is because it will in general delineate how you give it a second thought and value their quality in your life. To cause your partner to feel your love, you can either choose to go with an ordinary gift or a romantic one as Testo Drive 365, it will in any case work.

Gift-giving is a demonstration that has consistently been in existence since prehistoric times. However, you ought not to stretch yourself as far as possible if you are to offer the ideal gift as it will just cause you to feel stressed. Regardless of whether you are searching for gifts for her or him, you need to recall that the easiest things in life, when offered with love and care, will consistently be the ideal gift. Put forth an attempt to give your loved one and perceive how your relationship is going to improve.

Coexisting with your partner necessitates that both of you explore and haggle some exceptionally close to home and difficult regions. Rehearsing niceness can help make your important relationships significantly more satisfying and agreeable for both of you.



## SET ASIDE TIME TO TALK

*W*e all know that talking to your partner and being open about your feelings is important. But it tends to be shockingly simple to let making time to consistently talk fall by the wayside — especially with the demands of a bustling working life or caring for youngsters.

You've most likely heard that communication is one of the keys to a perfect relationship, but that is frequently more difficult than one might expect. Now and again, communication in a relationship can be out and out hard. Two people with different characters can battle to communicate in a compelling and solid manner. However, if you need your relationship to last, it's important to take a shot at figuring out how to talk to your partner to improve your relationship.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNICATION

Studies have discovered that having positive and great communication can be a pointer of the satisfaction of a couple. If you communicate well with your beau, at that point this is uplifting news. But, many couples battle here. What's more, as per one survey of mental wellbeing experts, helpless communication is the main source of couples separating.

It is a typical misinterpretation that you must have a comparative communication style as your partner all together for your relationship to succeed. While it might be all the more testing to get familiar with another method of communication, it positively doesn't block you from having the option to take a shot at issues with your sweetheart. If this is the situation in your relationship, both you and your sweetheart must have the option to oblige each other by understanding that their style may be different but it is right. Besides, the manner in which you give love probably won't be the manner in which you need to receive love. If you don't think you and your sweetheart have great communication aptitudes at this moment, don't stress. Your relationship isn't damned. It's been discovered that couples can improve the joy of their relationship by learning better communication abilities.

Why is talking each day important? A couple of reasons - Firstly, it permits you to talk about whatever may be irritating you. Having the space to go over whatever you may be finding difficult — either in the relationship or in life by and large — implies you'll have the option to communicate and cooperate to address the problem.

Without doing this, things can aggregate and make pressure. It very well may be enticing to just attempt to hide things away from plain view to keep the harmony. But building up a capacity to talk things over in a positive and gainful manner (and without the conversation transforming into an

argument) implies you'll have the option to change in accordance with the inescapable difficulties that will come your way during your time as a couple.

Conveying along these lines is an ability that comes more normally to certain people than others, and it very well may be difficult to begin if you haven't had a lot of training. But you can learn. If you'd like tips on talking, look at our communication tips to attempt with your partner. This short rundown of thoughts will help you to communicate in a manner that is bound to prompt understanding.

Furthermore, talking standard is important, because it's additionally just an incredible method of feeling near each other. Indeed, it's probably the most ideal approach to feel associated with your partner.

Talking together doesn't need to mean going over huge stuff — sometimes it can simply mean staying nearby together and appreciating each other's conversation. It can mean sharing a joke, talking about how the day has gone or making arrangements for the end of the week.

What's important is that you're getting to know one another, without interference, to be close, and basically appreciate being in a couple.

## WHY COUPLES SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS

As a couple, you're constantly talking about what's for dinner and plans with friends or family. The day-to-day running of your lives together, particularly if you have kids,<sup>1</sup> is often the central focus of your conversations. Talking about these things is necessary, but the most important piece that you should not gloss over is how you feel about what's going on in your life day-to-day.

These more profound conversations are important to make the "stick" that holds you together and makes the closeness people want in their marriage. It's important that you talk about your highs and lows that have been sprinkled consistently. These themes might be from outside associations with others or something specifically among you and your spouse.

The two women and men can battle with sharing feelings, but men appear to have a much harder time. Spouses every now and again grumble about the "absence of closeness" or "connection" with their husbands. What's more, for women, closeness and connection are what starts her sexual want. In this manner, it merits the exertion, folks!

The perks of constant communication between couples are so numerous and they include: keep fights from heightening, prevent hatred among couples, helps your partner feel compassion and "stroll from your point of view", set off holding hormones, create a profound and important connection with your partner, get out of having just shallow conversations and to mention a few.

Don't simply concentrate on the realities, but likewise center around how you feel about the responses to these questions. What comes up as you are talking about it with your spouse? Would you be able to identify a

specific feeling, for example, shock, satisfaction, sadness,3 outrage? How about the harder ones like dismissal, disgrace, or embarrassment?

If you are uncertain, it's alright to state that you don't know how you feel. It's alright to check whether your partners, who may have all the more a "language" for feelings, help you out. You can feel befuddled or have blended emotions as well. Whatever it is, put forth a valiant effort to portray it.

There are some things you can do if you struggle with talking about deeper topics with your partner. A few people truly battle to raise the points that sway their relationship. This is because it takes advantage of our most exceedingly awful fears about being rejected, deserted or some other loathsome activity by our partner. But, similar to the regular daily existence points, it's insufficient to simply talk about your contemplations and assessments on the harder issues (child rearing, sex, parents in law, funds, etc.). You should likewise examine (you got it!) how you feel about these themes.

When one partner is receptive or avoidant about proposing one of these subjects it is frequently demonstrative of something more profound. Couples must slice through preventing, raising outrage, or closing down to talk about their basic "center" emotions.

The more profound, center emotions are what keeps a profound and significant connection and romantic bond flourishing. It likewise forestalls on-going negative examples of communication. For example, if you feel "I can never satisfy her" or "I'm not important to him," this might be what sets one of you off into reactivity over your differing perspectives things like how to go through your cash, recurrence of sex or the measure of time went through with the parents in law.

It is substantially more gainful to communicate genuine feelings as opposed to giving the quiet treatment, conveying resentment, getting latent



forceful, or hollering. Moreover, it is a lot simpler for your partner to react to these center delicate emotions. It is a success win for you both.

## TIPS FOR MAKING DAILY CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR PARTNER NEW AGAIN

When you fantasize about being in the ideal long haul relationship, we're willing to wager that the piece of the intrigue is in its conviction that all is good and scheduled. You relish the idea of returning home every day to the equivalent great individual, knowing that you'll have somebody to impart a dinner to, of the solace of somebody you love lying close to you in bed each night. It's practically the most ideal sort of schedule, no? But what happens when the consistency you once wanted for begins to feel somewhat stale? Of course, you get the opportunity to sit over the table from a similar individual consistently, but you likewise may start to feel like you're having a similar conversation with that individual consistently.

Regardless of whether the topic is only workplace issues and tasks, we searched out tips from communication and relationship specialists to cause your exhausting conversations with your spouse unexpectedly to feel new and fascinating once more.

You can start by always welcoming specific conversations. Measure what your special somebody really wants to talk about by essentially asking them! Asking, "Do you have to talk about...?" is an extraordinary spot to begin. "Any open-finished greeting to be heard sends the message that you are thought about and that you matter," energizes clergyman and psychotherapist Sheri Heller. "Offering quality time to tune in to your partner's musings and feelings extends your connection."

Another way is to always allow and make use of open-ended questions. Stay away from yes-or-no questions to keep the conversation streaming. Advisor Heidi McBain recommends a couple of model open-finished questions: What did you do at the beginning of today grinding

away? Where did you go for lunch? What was the feature of your day? How did your early evening time meeting go?

Offer the great and the awful. Present the happenings of your day by arranging the high and depressed spots. At that point, welcome your S.O. to do likewise. Couples advocate and Baltimore Therapy Center chief Raffi Bilek noticed that surrounding your conversation along these lines should make for a more fascinating conversation than endeavoring to summarize your entire day in a solitary sudden spike in demand for sentence.

During important conversations, endeavor to keep your phone aside. This ought to be an easy decision regardless of who you're talking to, but if you truly need to associate with your significant other in the wake of a difficult day, authorized marriage and family specialist Melissa Dumaz fortifies the significance of unplugging. There are sufficient expected interruptions impacting everything during the weekday — don't acquaint superfluous ones by attempting to perform multiple tasks between talking to your partner what's more, following notifications.

React in the manner in which you would need to be reacted to. Keep the Golden Rule of conversations. "If you react all the more insightfully and intricately, you'll likely get more conversation from your spouse, too," reminds sex and relationship mentor Colby Marie. "As humans, we frequently mirror the sum and level of self-revelation from those we speak with, so if you give a great deal of data, your partner is bound to, also."

Would you like to make a more extravagant connection with your partner? To have those conversations that are cozy and significant? Is it accurate to say that you are closing down open doors for a more profound relationship with somebody you love by the manner in which you talk with them?

Pause, I'm grieved. Let me attempt those questions once more.

How to improve people? Relate a time when you had an important conversation. What sorts of questions evoke a more profound engagement?

## HOW TO HAVE BETTER CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR PARTNER

Everyone has conversations with people who are not gifted in associating, and perhaps we battle to interface in conversations. Associating through conversation is indispensable to any relationship, and our questions regularly decide the nature of that engagement. The way to pose drawing in inquiries might be easier than you might suspect.

There's an informal articulation: it's not what you state, but how you state it. Despite the fact that the tone of our questions is important, the genuine questions themselves are the way to connecting with conversations. Peruse the main section of this article once more. How would someone be able to react to the questions in this first section? They are totally shut ended questions, which ordinarily brief straightforward single word answers, so what you state does make a difference.

We all have been the one awkwardly posing inquiries of the individual we need to dazzle or interface with, just to end up running the conversation into a block divider. These kinds of questions limited down the potential reactions to a form of either yes or no. When you ask shut ended inquiries, you lead your conversation partner down a way that seriously restricts open doors for profundity and connection.

Things being what they are, in what ways are shut ended questions a piece of those conversations? How would we be able to liberate ourselves from this restricted method of talking?

Learning how to ask open-ended questions is important for effective communication in a relationship. There is an extremely basic methodology in how you talk with your loved ones that can upgrade your capacity to make better conversations—especially with your partner—and that is to ask open-ended inquiries. Open-ended questions originate from Miller and

Rollnick's Motivational Interviewing, which is a generally acknowledged type of exchange that upgrades the member's inspiration to acknowledge the change. But open-ended questions are not just useful for treatment; they are likewise key to encouraging connecting with conversations in our regular day to day existence.

To more readily upgrade the open door for more profound, more extravagant conversation, as per Miller and Rollnick, you need to chip away at your expressing of questions. Open-ended implies that the questions can't be properly replied with a basic "yes" or "no." Open-ended questions don't start with "do" or "did," which by and large brief a basic answer; open-ended kinds of questions, for the most part, start with these words: How did you, in what ways, outline for me, what's it like and so on.

If you have a high school student, imagine asking them this question by the day's end: "Did you have a decent day today?" Do you imagine that will incite an exciting conversation where your adolescent opens up to you pretty much the entirety of their deepest desires? Obviously it won't. Rather, you could attempt: "In what ways did you feel achieved today?"

Asking open-ended questions empowers the individual you're chatting with to think basically and along these lines to be all the more captivating, because open-ended questions permit the respondent, not the asker, to control the reaction.

Have a go at perusing the second section of this article once more, and notice how the passage totally contained open-ended questions that require significantly more basic ideas than the questions in the primary section. You are welcome to self-reflect and to jump into engaging answers that are ready for follow-up questions. In utilizing more open-ended questions in conversation, you welcome people to talk with you instead of talk to you. That is the formula for better conversations.

When it arrives at romantic relationships, asking open-ended inquiries is especially important, and The Gottman Institute's strategies urge couples to

ask open-ended inquiries of one another all the time to extend their closeness. How about we envision those moments in a romantic relationship where the connection is difficult, where being busy is the norm, yet you long for a rich conversation with your partner like you used to have.

You go to your partner and ask, "Do you feel content with our relationship at the present time?" How can somebody start to address this inquiry when it may appear to be so reductive? We should revamp this inquiry to be more open-ended and perceive how it brings out conversation: "In what ways do you feel content with our relationship?" This open-ended model gives a considerably more useful setting to all the more likely know what is working out positively in the relationship.

Which carries us to this: better conversation is more helpless and more private conversation. It is exceptionally difficult to share your musings and emotions by responding to shut ended questions, but with open-ended questions, the entryway for more profound connectedness is flung all the way open. Without a doubt, you can't compel somebody to be open and genuine and share their more profound selves, but you can make a climate that welcomes further connection.

Open-ended questions expect us to be occupied with what we are stating. Also, when we are occupied with what we are stating, we make better and more important conversation.

If you feel like you just never relate with one another and things have been like this for some time, you may require a tad of outside help to kick things kick-off again.

It's in circumstances like this that directing can be extremely helpful. Your instructor will offer you both the chance to communicate and help you consider approaches to reconnect. They can help you talk about how you got to this point in any case and to investigate any issues that may have contributed.



## WHEN YOU LISTEN, REALLY LISTEN

Communication is a two-way process consisting of conveying and getting the message. Therefore, a compelling communication in a relationship doesn't just incorporate the manner in which you talk to your partner, but how you listen all the time.

The capacity to listen to your partner well, especially when something is troubling them, is one of the most important relationship qualities you can have. Doing this makes your partner feel special and loved while additionally furnishing them with the knowledge that they have a sheltered spot to go to whenever they have to talk or feel that something isn't right. It can now and again be exceptionally difficult to listen to your partner without responding in an argumentative manner especially if it appears that they are scrutinizing you. It takes a ton of development to fight the temptation to safeguard yourself even with such s especially when you can't help contradicting what is being said or feel unjustifiably judged.

The aptitude of listening is especially important for men to ace. This is because women esteem a man who can listen to them exceptionally as in doing so they are satisfying one of the most important things women search for in a relationship. All the time women use talking as a method of working through their problems or different sorts of emotional stress while men then again want to take care of their problems inside and are more inclined to quietness while they make sense of things for themselves. Where women are concerned it is frequently the situation that you don't have to give them any answers or guidance, it is sufficient to be happy to listen mindfully to her as she works through her own procedure and discovers her own serene resolution.

For men, it involves expanding your restraint and to likewise set aside the effort to understand the other gender only somewhat better. By basically knowing how to listen accurately you can maintain a strategic distance from



a lot of pointless arguments in a relationship. For women it is important not to anticipate that a man should consequently know this about you, rather you should assume liability for instructing him in what you need and trust that he thinks enough about the relationship to need to do what will make you cheerful and fulfill your essential needs.

Many people are acceptable in talking, especially when they're angry at someone. They even practice the lines that they are going to state, for the most part frightful words, so they feel better a while later. The problem is that it doesn't cause you to feel great. It just scars your relationship and that makes more problems later on. You need to understand that listening, and it's not talking, is the most important piece of communication.

## HOW YOU CAN DEVELOP YOUR LISTENING SKILL AS A COUPLE

Listening to your spouse is by a wide margin, one of the most overlooked abilities in having a decent relationship. Many people are simply excessively occupied with different things that aren't generally part of the issue, or problem, that couples have. This is the motivation behind why this aptitude is created in marriage mentoring programs.

Recalling these things will help you build up your listening ability:

One of the things you should know is that agreeing or obeying isn't equivalent to listening. Have you at any point said "Listen to me!" to your partner, in marriage mentoring or a typical day at home, but what you truly implied is this - "You need to concur with me!"? Continuously recall that listening is, essentially, simply hearing and understanding what you two are attempting to state to one another, nothing else.

Also, until someone listens and understands, it's difficult to determine an issue. An issue that continues returning over and over is because of the way that no one listens in the relationship. One would state it's the other's shortcoming, and the other will do likewise - it is a ceaseless cycle. In settling an issue, both of you need to listen cautiously to what each is attempting to state.

To develop your listening skills, you should also understand that pain or fear results in outrage. Marriage mentoring programs state that when listening to your partner, remember that outrage is the consequence of pain or fear. Before being guarded and returning at your partner with outrage, know why your partner is harmed or frightened. Thus, you can have more sympathy in listening.

Between understanding couples, everyone accepts that their own suppositions and feelings are correct. You argue with your partner because you trust you are correct and the other isn't right. The other individual does

likewise which never settles the issue if you don't listen. Listening helps you understand the truth of the conclusions and feelings of your partner. Allow your partner to clarify what they accept occurred.

## WHY (AND HOW) TO BE A BETTER LISTENER IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Feelings of closeness and intimacy can get a relationship through difficult situations and help couples flourish when the relationship is acceptable.

One approach to fabricate closeness in your relationship is by imparting your considerations and feelings to one another and afterward reacting to those revelations such that causes you both to feel great. In relationships research, they call this being "receptive to your partner's needs." Being a responsive partner, and feeling like your partner is receptive to you, is truly at the center of good communication and closeness. When you feel like your partner truly gets you, you feel like nothing else matters.

Now the question is how would you be able to fabricate closeness intimacy with your partner? The initial step is being happy to reveal your musings and feelings to your partner. These exposures shouldn't be about your relationship (in spite of the fact that they can be). It's more about keeping you and your partner in a state of harmony by sharing the considerations that experience your psyche for the duration of the day. You may feel that the senseless web image you saw online does not merit mentioning, but if you set aside the effort to impart it to your partner, you are making a connection that integrates both of you. If you try not to enlighten your partner concerning your day, great and awful, of all shapes and sizes, you and your partner will start to carry on with discrete lives and this will raise separation instead of closeness.

Also, it is similarly as important that you ensure you are open to listening when your partner wants to impart their considerations and feelings to you. Try not to moan or take a gander at your telephone or state you don't have time. Rather, empower their exposures as an approach to support your partner and draw nearer to them. Their revelations may be

something little and senseless to you, but it may be extremely significant to them.

You presumably don't have unlimited hours to sit and talk about your days and there might be times when you feel too occupied to even think about taking a couple of seconds for an inactive visit. But it's likely the most important to set aside some effort to do this when life is disrupting the general flow. If you just make some little memories together, that is even more motivation to manufacture closeness whenever and any place you can.

Preferably, this occurs face to face, but if you go through a large portion of your day separated, you can fabricate closeness for the duration of the day by sharing your musings and feelings via telephone, text, email, or online talk. See a news story that made you think? Send it to your partner and disclose to them why you enjoyed (or didn't care for) it. Hear a melody you loved on the radio on your approach to work? Email a connection of it to your partner when you have a moment and solicit what they think from it. Have a disappointing conversation with your chief? Venture outside for a moment and call your partner to vent.

The second means to building closeness is to be a responsive listener when your partner reveals to you their considerations and feelings. What precisely does it intend to be a responsive listener? Some portion of it is that entire "don't moan and state you don't have time" piece. Express enthusiasm for your partner and be locked in. Set your telephone aside and show you are genuinely listening. At that point be understanding, validating, and mindful.

The first is being understanding. The objective is extremely about looking for understanding. You have to ensure you understand what your partner is attempting to state.

How to do it: Clarify what your partner is stating by asking them what they said or rehashing back to your partner what you think they said. You can do this with expressions, for example, "So what you are stating is..., ``"

Would I be able to ensure I understand?" and "Would you be able to state that once more?"

Another way is to validate your partner's viewpoint. The objective here is extremely about ensuring your partner feels that you get what they are stating as well as why they are stating it. You have to ensure your partner knows that you truly get what their identity is and why they figure the manner in which they do and that you respect and value them.

How to do it: Let your partner know that you "get" them with phrases like "I can perceive any reason why that would be important to you," "I understand why you did that," "I can perceive any reason why you'd be extremely cheerful about that," "That more likely than not made you truly [insert emotion]." You can likewise communicate agreement with expressions, for example, "I'd feel that way as well" or "I'd do something very similar."

Being mindful is also another way to be a better listener. The goal here is is tied in with telling your partner they are loved and supported and that you are there for them.

How to do it: Be affectionate in your behavior and words (kiss, embrace, say "I love you"). Tell your partner you are in it together. "This issue to me as well," "This is important for the two of us," "We'll make sense of it together." If your partner is talking about something negative, express support ("I'm here for you," "Let me know how I can help"). If your partner is talking about something positive, express excitement and encouragement ("That's incredible! We should celebrate!").

## TOP LISTENING ABILITIES TO BETTER YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Opening your heart to your spouse and sustaining theirs requires listening great. With so many different issues, commitments, gadgets, and people pulling at us from each course, it very well may be difficult to back off and genuinely listen to each other. Listening can be wonderful, but sometimes it's out and out hard. Sometimes, you should block out and lose yourself in your preferred pastime rather—or jump into the rundown of to-do things you despite everything need to check off before the day is finished.

But to have a sound, flourishing marriage, it's basic to really listen to your spouse with compassion and liberality. Today, we're sharing five different ways you can be a decent listener for your spouse

The first is to listen with empathy. When you practice sympathy, you're imagining your spouse's perspective and seeing things through their eyes. Regardless of whether you're attempting to determine a conflict or essentially listening to your spouse talk about their day, it's gainful to both of you to listen with sympathy when your spouse addresses you. For you, it gives you a window into their reality and their viewpoint. For your spouse, knowing that you're listening from an empathic vantage point helps them feel secure.

Possibly your spouse needs to vent about work, and typically, you block out when they begin talking about their intense day or their difficult undertaking. Rather than turning your psyche off while they talk, attempt to see the occasions of the day through their eyes, and with regards to your life. Have you been managing problems at home, as monetary issues, issues with the children, or dealing with a weak parent? Contextualizing your entire life alongside what's going on at your spouse's activity will help you understand the degree of heap they're managing.

Another listening ability is to listen for emotion. When your spouse needs to talk to you about something—especially if it's something hard—it's anything but difficult to get wrapped up and diverted by your own emotions on the subject. All things considered, you may react to your spouse in an absolutely unseemly manner in your endeavor to mitigate the difficult emotions that surface for you. Rather, pause for a moment to listen for what your spouse may be feeling. This sort of deliberate listening goes connected at the hip with sympathy.

When you've identified what your spouse is feeling—regardless of whether it's annoyance, bitterness, disappointment, nervousness, or excitement—you can change your reactions dependent on their emotional state. It gives you an additional opportunity to take a look at yourself before you state or accomplish something that may worsen the emotional state they're in. When our emotions go into a spiral, it very well may be difficult to keep communication sound.

Listening without bias is another ability that will make you better understand your partner well. You've both heard your thoughts, and it's difficult to release those sentiments for basically listening to each other. Listening without predisposition is helpful when you have inverse positions on specific issues, or when you're secured an impasse during a fight. Put your sentiments in a safe spot for enough time to hear what your spouse is stating, at that point practice your sympathy abilities to attempt to understand why.

This doesn't mean you need to change your supposition to coordinate your spouse's. What it implies is that your spouse has the right to be heard, and you can't really hear if you're sifting all that they state through your own inclination.

Listening in a loving way goes a long way towards better understanding your spouse as well. When you're speaking with your spouse, it very well may be helpful to utilize loving signals and non-verbal communication to



tell them you care about what they need to state. It very well may be as basic as holding eye to eye connection and gesturing to avow what they're letting you know. You could likewise connect with touch them or clasp hands. Turn your body toward them, or even stop what you're doing and simply sit with them if that is what they need.

While you might have the option to continue on ahead and have a conversation simultaneously (and that can be alright sometimes), there will be times where you have to recently put everything down and center all your attention around your spouse. Mood killer the TV, put down your telephone or different gadgets, overlook the plan for the day for a brief period, and give your spouse loving attestation through eye to eye connection and to.

If you learn to listen generously, your spouse needs the gift of your time and attention. It's difficult to remove time from our bustling lives to liberally give our vitality to listening when we have such a great amount to do each day, but conveying openly is critical to a solid marriage. When you listen liberally, your spouse will feel secure in coming to you with their interests, expectations, and fears.

Convincingly, having the option to listen is probably the best expertise an individual can have in keeping up a decent relationship. When you listen to somebody and they truly feel like you have understood them then you will have a much simpler time getting them to listen to what you need to state when things are convoluted.

One issue that causes a lot of conflict in relationships is the absence of listening. If one individual in the relationship doesn't feel listened to appropriately, there can be some disappointment. Over the long haul, great communication will be vital to a sound enduring relationship so it's important to figure out how to listen to one another.

Be certain that while listening to things that you pose inquiries and rehash it with the goal that the other individual knows that you understand.

Be certain that you don't sound excessively mocking while at the same time doing this else it can cause the other individual to feel like you are putting down their endeavors.

Ensure that your partner knows that you have the opportunity to listen to the person in question. This probably won't imply that you are doing so at the present time, but that the entryway is open for the person in question to communicate the things that should be said. Knowing one can be listened to can mean a great deal. This incorporates keeping numerous alternatives open for the individual to stand out enough to be noticed so you two can talk at a more profound level when required.

Every now and then remind your partner about the more profound and more important things that the person has communicated. This will show that you were listening as well as that you care enough to recall these things longer term. While you can't recall everything, give a valiant effort to attempt. The exertion will mean a lot.



## ALWAYS RESPECT EACH OTHER

*P*eople have many thoughts regarding what "respect" signifies. Sometimes, it is utilized to mean profound regard for somebody important or helpful to us. Different times, respect refers to regard towards a figure of power, similar to a parent, relative, instructor, chief or even a cop. In this unique situation, it is assumed that respect ought to be given to the people who have specific sorts of knowledge and force. And afterward different times, respect implies maintaining the essential right that each individual needs to settle on their own decisions and feel safe in their own day by day lives.

In this aspect of this guide, we're talking about respect with regards to dating. In a sound relationship, partners are approaches, which implies that neither one of the partners has "authority" over the other. Each partner is allowed to carry on with their own life, which can incorporate choosing to impart a few parts of their life to their partner. Respect additionally implies that, while we may not generally concur with our partner/s, we decide to confide in them and put confidence in their judgment. This trust can be worked after some time as your relationship advances and you study one another.

Respect is one of the most important parts of any relationship. It implies that you and your partner are rising to. Nobody remains over the other and everybody's voice is heard. When couples have respect, it lets loose them to be their own individual, having their own advantages, suppositions, and feelings unafraid of dismissal or retaliation from their partner. Respect is significant to a marriage's prosperity, as it frequently positions higher than love as far as what's generally important. This bodes well: After all, it's difficult to have one without the other. But respect can be difficult to quantify, especially as guardians when jobs change and dignity shift. All in all, what does respect really look like in a loving relationship? It fluctuates,

obviously. But partners who respect each other make certain to do these 10 things.

Self-Respect - while it's important to respect your partner in a relationship, it's additionally extremely important to have respect for yourself, regardless of whether single or dating. Dignity is the way to building certainty and keeping up sound relationships with others for the duration of your life.

Things being what they are, what is self-respect? Confidence is an acknowledgment of yourself in general. It doesn't mean you believe you're great; actually, we as a whole merit respect despite the fact that we are NOT great. You have worth and worth because you're you. Dignity implies you hold yourself to your own guidelines, and you make an effort not to stress a lot over what others consider you. You deal with your body and psyche (or you're figuring out how!), regardless of whether that is through eating well nourishments, moving your body in manners that feel great to you, perusing and picking up, going to treatment, rehearsing your confidence or any number of things that respect what your identity is.

Why Respect Matters- respect is important in every single human relationship. If you can't respect somebody for what they've done, you can give them fundamental human respect or respect the job they play regardless of whether you don't respect the individual. Genuine respect, however, is especially important in love relationships. Because enduring love relationships help characterize who you are as an individual, it's urgent that the relationship is a solid one. When you and your partner respect one another, you make a sound relationship in which you can both develop and add individual quality all through your lifetime.

When you neglect to respect your partner, you keep yourself from receiving legit respect from them consequently. Your disappointment makes an environment where your partner can't be their best. Similarly as

important, you put yourself in that equivalent environment, where love is more similar to an infection and a weight to both of you.

There is a lot of value in a respectful and loving relationship. Showing respect isn't just about maintaining a strategic distance from an awful relationship. It offers many positive advantages for you separately and for you and your partner as a couple. A respectful love relationship can help every one of you as people by giving you an emotionally protected space, building your fearlessness, allowing you opportunity and autonomy, fostering your self-awareness, increasing your inspiration to exceed expectations at what you do, Bringing you feelings of self-esteem and acknowledgment from another, helping you see the world in a positive light, the same sort of love can likewise do the accompanying for you as a couple, Improve communication inside the relationship, empower you to manage conflict in solid and beneficial manners, help you settle on better choices as a couple, let you appreciate each other's conversation more, Help you work out differences without cutting off the association and so on.

When you really love somebody, you need the best for them. If you need to put forth a strong effort, it makes sense that you need to give them your most extreme respect. How would you do that? You do it by the manner in which you consider them, communicate, and act toward them.

Another key is one that we frequently underestimate: stand by to get into a relationship until you meet somebody that you respect. When we face strain to be in a relationship from companions, the media, or even from inside ourselves, it tends to be anything but difficult to begin a relationship with somebody that we don't generally love or respect. Sometimes these relationships can turn out to be, but it bodes well to remain single until the correct individual tags along.

## SEE YOUR PARTNER AS DESERVING OF RESPECT

If you don't see anything to respect about your partner, why are you still with them? You most likely accept there's something splendid about them. Maybe you simply haven't considered it much. If not, presently an extraordinary time. To start with, recollect that they merit fundamental human respect. At that point, consider the things you respect about them precisely. Consider their characteristics. Is it accurate to say that they are generally neighborly, funny, wise, or tranquil? What about their achievements? What have they done that intrigues you? What are they acceptable at? Is it accurate to say that they are an incredible craftsman, parent, businessman, or home decorator? Is it true that they are ready to do things others can't? You set up for approaching them with respect by concentrating on what makes your partner the remarkable mix of capacities, achievements, and individual characteristics that alone they are. It's important to recall that the things you consider frequently are the things that you're going to see the most.

If you're continually centered around the things that you don't respect about your partner, then it will be hard when you're constructing a wellbeing relationship that has respect in the establishment.

Being observant is a way to let your partner know that you respect him/her. You'll never know precisely how splendid your partner is if you don't observe what they do, how they carry on, and what they achieve. Construct your respect by seeing their victories. Notice which of their achievements makes them most joyful and know about their extraordinary attributes. Everybody has worth and something great in them. Some portion of achieving this is having constructed undivided attention abilities. When they talk, focus on pieces of information. If you're focusing, you'll see a greater amount of what makes them what their identity is. It's important in

romantic relationships to deliberately search for the beneficial things in your partner.

**Value Your Partner for Who They Are.** Many people have that thought of what their ideal partner would resemble. This perfect picture doesn't help you construct respect for your partner. Put it in a safe spot, and recognize the truth about your partner. Rather than whining that they aren't what you might want them to be, commend them as they seem to be. This helps couples assemble solid relationships.

Another way to show your partner that he/she deserves your respect is to constantly communicate Your respect. Your respect will affect your partner more when you communicate it well. Tell them what you respect about them. Show them how cheerful you are when they achieve something that intrigues you. You can communicate through words or looks of approval. Try not to stop complimenting them legitimately. Tell others how much you esteem their accomplishments and individual character. Sometimes, getting notification from their companions how you feel can be similarly as satisfying to your partner as hearing it from you and it can do wonders for building a romantic relationship.

**Treat Your Partner as Inherently Valuable. Not A Means to an End.** Your partner may help you from numerous points of view. They may urge you to give a valiant effort. They may help you in viable manners, as well, such as supporting you while you advance in your instruction or your vocation. Regardless of what they accomplish for you, however, don't dismiss their incentive in simply being what their identity is. Absolutely, you have to tell them you acknowledge what they accomplish for you. Go past that, however. When building positive relationships, let them know that in any event, when they aren't doing anything for you, you appreciate them in their own right.

Also, to respect your spouse, always choose to pick respectful actions. Recall when building wellbeing relationships, including a romantic



relationship, each activity is a decision. Think before you act. Pick behaviors that show your respect. Give them the motivation to feel safe with you by not insulting them verbally or truly. Make time to be with them. Go along with them in commending their achievements. Be courteous to them.

Respect their decisions in any event, when they don't profit you. These things go far in making positive relationships.

It's anything but difficult to state that you have respect for somebody, but acting with respect can be somewhat trickier. That is why we need to talk about how you can show respect in your relationship. All things considered, because you don't genuinely hurt your partner or call them names, doesn't imply that you are approaching your partner with respect.

Here are six different ways that you can show your partner respect.

## SIX WAYS TO SHOW RESPECT TO YOUR PARTNER

The first is to always exhibit trust. Trust is basic in any relationship, even non-romantic ones. But it implies significantly more than accepting that your partner won't undermine you, and feeling trust isn't close to as incredible as showing that you confide in your partner with your activities.

You can show trust by not messaging or calling your partner continually. Rather, text or call them once. Leave a message saying that you're considering them and that you plan to get notification from them soon. This shows you believe them to connect with you when they can, and that you know your partner values your endeavors.

This ought to abandon saying, but don't experience your partner's telephone or individual things without consent. If you have a bizarre feeling that they're attempting to conceal something from you, talk to them about it. There's no compelling reason to work up dramatization if there's nothing going on!

Secondly, be aware of how you communicate. Communication is one of the most important pieces of a relationship, and one of the hardest. That is because being open and legitimate with your partner implies being open and fair with yourself.

Try not to anticipate that your partner should be a brain reader. If you're disturbed, it's important to talk openly about what's irritating you. Try not to be accusatory. Use "I" statements, similar to "I feel truly disregarded and unimportant when you drop our arrangements finally," or "I feel irritated when you continue requesting that I hang out when you know I have to contemplate. I truly value it when others respect my time." Your emotions are consistently valid—don't feel awful for feeling what you feel.

Everybody differs sometimes, and that is absolutely alright. When you do, don't vanish or close down communication. At the very least, tell your

partner that you're vexed and need some time to chill off and process your musings before you talk. Along these lines, they don't feel like you're vanishing on them or overlooking their feelings. Validate your partner's feelings by making statements like, "I understand why you feel that way," or "I hear what you're stating."

Communication goes amazing, however. You can tell your partner that you care by wearing the cologne they like, imparting a playlist to them, or bringing them blossoms.

Be dependable and responsible. A tremendous piece of a relationship is trust, but how would you be able to believe somebody if they're continually dropping plans or, far more atrocious, lying?

When you make arrangements, finish. Try not to express yes to a supper you don't know you'll have the option to go to. Rather, be responsible. Keep a schedule and check it when you and your partner are making arrangements. Try not to state you'll call and afterward don't. Rather, set an update on your telephone. Being trustworthy respects your partner's time and emotional vitality. All things considered, it very well may be stressful to have your arrangements change continually.

Obviously there will be times when you must choose the option to drop—there's a family crisis, you're wiped out, you overlooked a major test that you need to read for. You shouldn't feel liable (or be caused to feel blameworthy!) about these conditions. But it can help a great deal if you show you're mindful of the impact that those activities (regardless of whether they're inside your control or not) have on your partner. Apologize, offer to reschedule, and ensure you check in with them when you're free.

The third of all is to encourage time apart. When you're in a new relationship, you might be eager to the point that you need to invest all your energy with your partner. That is absolutely ordinary. But it tends to be barely noticeable in the other important relationships in your life, as with your loved ones. No single individual—regardless of how wonderful they

are—can deal with all your social and emotional needs. Also, everybody needs a break from their significant other occasionally. Investing energy alone or with others implies that both of you can keep on developing as people. You can both carry new thoughts and exercises to your relationship, keeping it energizing and locks in. It likewise allows you both to talk about your relationship with your loved ones. Who wouldn't like to boast somewhat about their new love?

Another way is to always value your differences. Try not to condemn your partner for their thoughts or interests. You can differ with somebody and still respect their feelings. Some portion of what makes relationships magnificent is the differences! Your partner can help you see the world from another point of view, regardless of whether you don't conclusively adjust your perspective. You can show your partner you welcome them by heading off to their ball game or craftsmanship show, regardless of whether you could never go to a baseball arena or workmanship display in any case.

Acknowledge your partner's limits, in any event, when they're different from yours. If your partner wouldn't like to kiss in broad daylight, or engage in sexual relations, or lie to their folks, don't pressure them. This is coercive and possibly injurious.

Become more acquainted with yourself. In a relationship, you're not simply becoming more acquainted with someone else. You're becoming acquainted with yourself better. Being in a relationship can help you make sense of what you need and need from the people you're close with. What are you ready to settle on? Which characteristics complement your own? What are your basic beliefs that you can't settle on? Perhaps you couldn't care less that your partner isn't into R&B music the manner in which you are, but you can't stand that they're mean to your feline. Become more acquainted with yourself as an individual and as a partner. Knowing yourself helps you communicate better, and your partner will welcome that.

Knowing your own limits makes it much simpler to know when those limits have been crossed, and when you should cut off an association.

Showing respect may sound entangled, but it's truly not. Everything comes down to listening to your partner and being caring for them.

## WHAT IF YOUR RELATIONSHIP ISN'T LOVING OR RESPECTFUL?

If you're reading this and feeling that your romantic relationship is bound because it's missing love and respect, don't surrender. It's important to understand that there are many tips for building sound relationships that you can follow to change that. Here are a couple of amazing ways can assemble solid relationship aptitudes:

Create communication abilities. When you don't have the foggiest idea how to communicate inside a romantic relationship in a loving and respectful manner, you may discover endeavors you make in different regions won't make any difference. Work on building up your relationship with respect to communication until you're ready to feel more good doing it in any event, when it's a difficult conversation to have.

Practice undivided attention. When you have constructed undivided attention abilities, your partner may feel that you are showing them respect and love by intentionally focusing on them. This can help you fabricate a solid connection and romantic relationship.

Watch your non-verbal communication. You may feel that you're being respectful, but your non-verbal communication might be sending a different message. When you're in a romantic relationship, there are more employments of non-verbal communication that you can put to use too. Ensure you are utilizing your non-verbal communication to communicate love and respect.

Assemble your emotional insight. Emotional knowledge is your capacity to know about your emotions and have the option to deal with them in a solid manner. Improving here can help your mental wellbeing and help you in all aspects of your life.

Romantic relationships aren't in every case simple. Remember that building a long haul, sound relationship takes work. Regardless of whether

you feel like your relationship had an incredible beginning, you may end up battling in the end. But by following tips for building a wellbeing relationship, you can turn it around.

If you need to have a passionate, lasting and successful relationship, at that point you need to begin with a gauge of shared respect. You need to ensure that you consider you to be your partner as a group and that you're kind, fair, and compassionate however much as could be expected. However, no one's ideal, and you must be set up to apologize truly when you have committed an error. If both you and your partner are eager to invest the exertion you can have a satisfying and respectful relationship.





## OWN UP TO YOUR MISTAKES – TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY

*A*ssuming ownership and responsibility for your deeds is an important part of sound relationships. Doing so is an engaging update that you have authority over the role you play in your relationship. Assuming responsibility creates trust and steadfastness between couples. When you take responsibility for your behaviors, you show your partner your eagerness to be completely forthright and defenseless, which in turn urges your partner to be open and credible with you.

Everybody makes mistakes. However, owning up to those mistakes might be more difficult for certain people. It might appear to be simpler to excuse your behavior as opposed to going up against reality and owning up to your mistakes. Dodging reality may put a strain on your relationship with somebody and it might be the reason for superfluous stress and concern. So when is it the opportune time to concede that you're off-base and what are the advantages to doing as such?

All through your marriage, you will commit errors. Albeit little mistakes won't at first hurt your marriage, if you don't acknowledge your mistakes, or you become cautious or justify your mistakes, those behaviors will make antagonism and an absence of trust among you and your spouse.

It doesn't have any effect if you've committed an insignificant error or a genuine misstep; you have to take ownership of the mix-up, admit to it, apologize for it, fix it, and not rehash it.

## WHAT TAKING RESPONSIBILITY LOOKS LIKE

It is important to recognize assuming and diverting liability for both you and your partner. Know about protective reactions which may incorporate "quit being so delicate" or "I didn't know that you thought about that" or "you should've said something." It's not just important for you to assume liability. It's something that is important that your partner learns and does so as to have a sound relationship.

For you, assuming liability looks like rehearsing mindfulness. Another way is having the option to apologize and acknowledge that what you do influences your partner. For your partner, assuming liability looks like having open communication with you about their feelings and being eager to concede they can develop from the hard pieces of the relationship. Your partner figures out how to assume liability when they own their behaviors and consider themselves responsible for their activities.

The most serious issue is how it influences the individual who faults. Accusation influences people from various perspectives. Exploration shows that people who accuse others lose status, learn less, and perform more terribly comparative with others. Specifically... Blame makes inaction. When somebody faults, maybe they're giving over control of the circumstance. "I can't change until you do," is the certain message. The solution is in their partner's hands.

Blame isolates people from your qualities, convictions, and commitment. If the problem has a place with another person, at that point you have the motivation to delve in your heels. You pass up on a chance to develop, to extend, to challenge yourself. You may botch an opportunity to change the manner in which you think or act, or an opportunity to be profoundly legit: by sharing your fear, or disappointment, or bitterness in a sincere way.

Blames keep down genuine change. Blame feels worldwide and progressing. If you consider your to be as indifferent, you don't see the little moments of caring she offers. If you consider him to be indifferent, you don't see little offers of affection and respect. If you consider yours to be as languid, you don't see their endeavors – however irregular – to carry out the responsibility well. What's more, if you don't see the mindful, the respect, and the endeavors, you can't acknowledge them. Also, without acknowledgment, they start to blur.

## TOLERATING MISPLACED BLAME

There is a critical difference between assuming liability and tolerating lost fault. Assuming liability is failing to accept fault for things you didn't do. For instance, when your partner reveals to you that something is your shortcoming, you don't consequently assume liability for whatever botch it was. It's basic in undesirable relationships, especially mutually dependent ones, for one individual (the manipulator) to state, "it's all your deficiency" and for his/her partner to state "it's all my issue." Many times, people may assume liability for things that are not their issue, and they may even do as such without intentionally acknowledging it. Rationalizing your partner's behavior or yourself is undesirable and may prompt these unfortunate behaviors being overlooked or acknowledged.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF OWNING UP TO YOUR MISTAKES

Regardless of how difficult it is to counter the components of our personality safeguard framework, the errand isn't entirely inconceivable. Each man who wishes to accept the job of manhood must put forth the attempt. In doing as such, you will find that endeavoring to assume liability for your life and ownership of your mistakes is extraordinarily beneficial for many reasons.

One is that it permits you to settle on better choices. Self-justifications twist reality. The more you use them, the more you make an imaginary world for yourself. This prompts a diminished capacity to use sound judgment, as the information you're utilizing to do so is distorted. This can keep you from the people and interests that could have been beneficial for you – if just you had the option to recognize the truth about them obviously.

Most perilously, one self-justification brings forth another, setting off a huge impact that sends you increasingly more of it. When you justify a particular decision you made, you go deeper into it and make similar choices in the future, even when you doubt if it was the correct decision, you'll settle on that choice that delves you much further into it and that's how the cycle goes. For instance, if you hit a child at school, you'll at that point feel some discord in the fallout for hurting somebody (nobody likes to consider themselves savage), so you'll justify that choice by saying the child is an irritating crybaby who merited it. The more you harp on those justifications, the more persuaded of them you'll become, and the more you'll feel like harassing him once more.

Another thing to gain is that it shields little problems from transforming into large ones. Identified with the point above, if you can own up to a misstep when you make it and give a valiant effort to address it or make it right, you can keep it from transforming into a gigantic problem that will be

difficult to comprehend. A snowballed misstep may destroy different parts of your relationships and vocation before you can get yourself free from it.

You also stand to gain from your mistakes if you own up to them. You can't gain from your mistakes if you can't acknowledge you've made them! What's more, if you don't gain from your mistakes, you're bound to rehash them. That is a formula for rapidly going no place in life.

If you take responsibility for your mistakes, it makes people respect you as well. We frequently conceal our mistakes from others because we stress they will consider less of us once they've seen that we've wrecked. But, honestly acknowledging your mistakes, saying 'sorry' for them, and afterward truly attempting to make things right quite often has the contrary impact— people respect you for it. There may in any case be outcomes, obviously, but people will value your genuineness. If they utilize your admission as an approach to deprecate and utilize you, those are most likely not the sort of people you need to work/live with at any rate. It's really when you conceal your mistakes, and they're discovered in any case, that people lose their respect and their trust in you.

Another advantage of owning up to your mistake is that it reinforces relationships. Self-justification is a chilly, hard relationship executioner, as it makes us construct an instance of absolute fault against the other individual when things are going ineffectively between you.

There are two different ways to clarify mistakes: the individual did what they did because of the circumstance, or, because of what their identity is. We utilize the previous clarification with ourselves — "I overlooked her birthday because I have such a great amount at the forefront of my thoughts at this moment." We will in general utilize the second clarification on others — "She overlooked my birthday because she's so conceited." We don't evaluate their behavior, but their character — they don't do terrible stuff, they are awful. This sort of cover judgment is known as a worldwide mark. The

individual is moronic, insane, futile, childish, juvenile, obnoxious, detestable, apathetic, and so on. They're a bombed human being.

Owning up to our mistakes permits us to assume liability for our lives. If we can't precisely see what our identity is, how we carry on (and how others act towards us), and how our behavior influences others and our own lives, life will consistently feel like something that is transpiring, instead of something we are in charge of

## HOW TO OWN UP TO YOUR PARTNER

Envision this situation: "Why'd you put mustard all over my fries?" Jack inquires. At that point Jill answers, "Well, you should've disclosed to me you don't care for mustard!"

This is a case of how in many cases people redirect ownership of their behaviors and refuse to accept responsibility for the issues at hand. Is Jack answerable for his now mustard-secured fries, or ought to Jill have assumed liability for her behavior? Assuming liability in your relationship is the acknowledgment and ownership of each activity and word you state and do.

Assuming liability isn't only an uneven practice. The accompanying approaches to utilize the engaging move of making duty are important for both you and your partner to utilize and rehearse in your relationship.

Being honest also helps you to accept your faults in your relationships too. "You need to love yourself before you love others" is a flexible expression that has various implications when applied to relationships. It can make an interpretation of "You must be straightforward with yourself before you can be straightforward with others." Being straightforward with yourself starts with a sound feeling of mindfulness. What's more, acting naturally mindful methods you acknowledge that what you state and do impacts your partner.

Alluding back to the mustard circumstance, envision you're Jill. A sound reaction is to take ownership of her activities and react with something like, "Gracious, I'm grieved! I ought to have asked you before I included mustard. I didn't understand you didn't care for mustard, and this is my misstep."

Follow up on Situations, Don't React. When people are considered responsible for their behaviors, they regularly become guarded. Getting cautious is a response. When you follow up on a circumstance, you can



react with lucidity and mindfulness. You can work on following up on circumstances as opposed to responding by taking full breaths or tallying to ten. It additionally helps to take a second and take a gander at the circumstance from your partner's point of view. It may very well be difficult to think from the other point of view, especially without giving it much thought. By being straightforward with yourself and your partner, you can viably react by assuming liability.

For instance: Jill is responding to Jack being disturbed as opposed to following up on her need to assume liability. Acting as opposed to responding permits you to plainly characterize a mindful and genuine response to undesirable behavior.

Be Eager to Forgive Your Partner and Yourself. Everybody commits errors and forgiving yourself or your partner is important for moving past difficulties and making your relationship more grounded. When you see accepting obligation regarding your mistakes as a chance to learn, your relationship can turn into a spot that cultivates and praises growth. Absolution manufactures trust and responsibility in your relationship, separates resentment, and stops the in no way enjoyable "habitual pettiness."

Assuming liability for your behaviors in your relationship requires genuine and open communication and a readiness to address unfortunate reasons with your partner. They're not in every case simple conversations to have, but you'll see that doing so assembles trust inside your relationship after some time and is an enabling method to learn and develop.

## THE POWER OF AN APOLOGY: WHY LOVE MEANS SAYING “I’M SORRY”

Why Apologize? There are many reasons why you should make an earnest expression of remorse when you've harmed somebody superfluously or have committed an error.

Initially, a conciliatory sentiment opens an exchange among yourself and the other individual. Your ability to concede your slip-up can give the other individual the open door he needs to communicate with you, and begin managing his feelings.

When you apologize, you likewise acknowledge that you are occupied with unsatisfactory behavior. This helps you revamp trust and restore your relationship with the other individual. It additionally allows you to examine what is and isn't worthy.

What's more, when you concede that the circumstance was your deficiency, you reestablish respect to the individual you hurt. This can start the recuperating procedure, and it can guarantee that she doesn't unreasonably reprimand herself for what occurred.

Last, a true statement of regret shows that you're assuming liability for your activities. This can reinforce your fearlessness, confidence, and notoriety. You're additionally prone to feel a liberating sensation when you confess about your activities, and it's perhaps the most ideal approach to reestablish your trustworthiness according to other people.

What are the outcomes if you don't apologize when you've made a mistake?

Initially, you will harm your relationships with partners, customers, companions, or family. It can hurt your notoriety, limit your profession openings, and lower your viability – and, others might not have any desire to work with you.

It likewise contrarily influences your group when you don't apologize. Nobody wants to work for a supervisor who can't own up to his mistakes, and who doesn't apologize for them. The enmity, pressure, and pain that accompanies this can make a harmful workplace.

Have you ever thought why apologies are difficult? With all these antagonistic results, why do a few people despite everything won't apologize?

To start with, expressions of remorse take mental fortitude. When you concede that you weren't right, it places you in a weak position, which can open you up to or fault. A few people battle to show this fearlessness.

On the other hand, you might be so loaded with disgrace and embarrassment over your activities that you can't force yourself to confront the other individual.

Or then again, you might be following the guidance "never apologize, never clarify." It's up to you if you need to be this egotistical, but, if you do, don't hope to be seen as an astute or a motivating head.

Saying 'sorry' is essential, since it helps to smooth any conflict and restore a profound connection with the partner. If you ace the specialty of saying 'sorry' it will help you diminish relationship stress and to proceed onward from conflicts and pressures. There are many demonstrated advantages of saying 'sorry'

- When you state that you are grieved, it reestablishes the poise of the hurt individual and causes them to feel better. The offended party, who receives the expression of remorse, creates compassion towards the wrongdoer, which at that point changes their feeling of hurt into pardoning.
- A conciliatory sentiment may reestablish trust and understanding to a relationship because it contributes to a feeling of security and causes both the receiver and the provider to feel good and

respected. Saying 'sorry' in this way helps you and your loved one remain emotionally associated, and reinforces the bond between both of you.

- When you make an earnest expression of remorse, and this trust and understanding gets reestablished, an individual can begin to see you in a different light. They will have a more noteworthy inclination to disregard your defects and feature your ethics.
- A powerful expression of remorse doesn't only mend the injury for the other individual, but also disintegrate your blame as well. By doing so, you eventually build up a feeling of self-respect and the ability to move on afterwards. Furthermore, It fills in as a hindrance, with the goal that you don't repeat similar mistakes.

Some accept that conceding you're off-base is an indication of shortcoming. As opposed to that conviction, I believe that owning your mistakes shows that you are sufficiently able to go up against reality paying little heed to the outcomes. Not acknowledging your mistakes implies that you are either inside or remotely accusing someone else. Accusing somebody who isn't to blame can harm the relationship you have with that individual. Subsequently, it's important to apologize when you have accomplished something incorrectly. Thus, you can proceed onward and gain from your slip-up.



## LIVE YOUR OWN LIFE TOO

Having a specific measure of emotional dependency on your partner is normal. That is, by its tendency, scarcely broken. However, when it's unreasonable, it stops to be sound—not for you, your partner, nor the relationship by and large.

The writing on social dependency in grown-ups underscores that it's important your partner has the option to offer you emotional support when it's required. That, all things considered, is firmly associated with feeling substance, safe, and cheerful in any relationship—especially a submitted one. It's continually consoling to know that your significant difference has your back, that they'll be there for you even in circumstances where you two don't agree. Besides, their availability to validate your perspectives and behavior, to view them as bona fide and by and by important—and in spite of their point of view not continually concurring with yours—can support your certainty and confidence.

But once we substitute the word dependency for support, we're taking a look at something very different. Why? Just because, as that term is normally utilized in treatment, it suggests that we can't satisfactorily validate or alleviate ourselves, that we have to depend on our significant other to give us the consolation that we're adequate, and sufficiently important, to merit their unrestricted love.

In such a case, being unsure of our partner's approval or commitment to us, we wind up concentrating as much on our questions as we think about them. When we can't feel adequately sure about a relationship, our love for them is (unprepared) displaced by fear: Might they leave us? Reject us? Supplant us? Surrender us? What's more, the more we should depend on their consolation to feel esteemed, the more we'll stay dependent on them. What's more, in the long run, this can prompt the relationship's debasement.

The problem here is that it's difficult to love somebody—and let them be liberated to be what their identity is—when, unknowingly, we need them to help us conceal past weaknesses. These weaknesses start significantly less from our present-day partner as from our prior history, regularly because, while growing up, our folks couldn't cause us to feel safely appended to them.

Also, as much consolation as our partner might be eager to offer us, we'll continually be looking for additional. That is because if we were infrequently ready to experience our folks' unrestricted acknowledgment when we were kids, we'll have extraordinary difficulty disguising whatever consolation our partner would now be able to offer us. Without a doubt, at the time we might be mitigated, take it in, and be helped. However, except if we can somehow clutch their consolation, secure it from inside, and make it a characteristic piece of a presently patched up mental self-view, their endeavors for our sake won't last. Their soothing words will before long blur from awareness. And afterward we'll need—and may even demand—more, and that's only the tip of the iceberg, of the equivalent. Like an espresso mug with an opening in the base, however much is filled it, it will before long be vacant once more.

## LIVING YOUR LIFE FOR YOURSELF

When you are approaching how to live for yourself, it implies that you have recently understood that you have been giving the vast majority of your time, ability, and vitality to other people and have put their needs before yours. Clearly, every now and then, we do that for our loved ones, but it happens once in a while that you commit your life to someone else or even an incredible reason, except if you are Nelson Mandela or Mahatma Gandhi.

I am happy to the point that you are asking this question, and it would appear that now you are going to assume liability for satisfying your own wants and needs. It doesn't make a difference at what age or phase of life you are in. It is sufficient that you have understood the need to remain consistent with yourself and make your life beneficial.

Living for Yourself Means Loving Yourself. Sometimes, you wrongly think that if you live for yourself, it is narrow-minded. It is seen that if you love yourself it is narrow-minded because this is what you were educated as a kid. In all actuality, there's no more prominent award in life other than to live for yourself and offer your novel abilities, qualities, and intelligence with the world. If you have a little confidence in your creation, you are a manifestation of love; God loves you, ensures you, so why not love God's creation with your own life and your motivation in life. Then again, characters like Nelson Mandela or Mahatma Gandhi were, indeed, the most narrow-minded people who loved themselves over and past anyone considers them. They loved themselves so much that they chose to carry on with life their way and leave their name alive in the entirety of mankind's history for eternity. Simply consider it.

Living For Yourself Means Confidence. So as to remain consistent with yourself and carry on with life your way, you'll need to have a degree of



certainty to conquer all the snags and difficulties that tag along your way. You'll have to have faith in your hunch that you are correct and you can make it. With certainty about needing something so terrible, you can cause everybody to trust you know what you are doing. Is it accurate to say that you are prepared?

You need to quit thinking and start living. Sometimes, you think a great deal and are consistently in arrangement and arranging mode that you don't get the chance to practice and experience things that you have at the top of the priority list. I was one of these people. With no valid explanation, I felt that I am not prepared, or the time that I satisfy my dreams has not come at this point. I generally realized what to do when the time comes; I discovered euphoria in planning and in deduction, but that doesn't serve me anymore. Presently, I am additionally at a high point not to plan excessively and begin making a move regardless of whether they are not great. I am prepared to settle on choices quickly and without a great deal of reasoning. My new perspective about life is this: Living is encountering not considering the experience.

Three things will help you to begin once again and decide to carry on with life with reason: Take obligation regarding your own bliss and your own life. It requires some work, know precisely what makes you upbeat and begin encountering them individually, get free of your own self-constraining convictions because nobody is compelling you not to live for yourself

## SIGNS YOU'RE TOO DEPENDENT ON YOUR PARTNER

Whenever you consider being in a relationship with somebody, you may consequently consider the love you have for the other individual and how much you rely upon them being in your life. But with this reliance accompanies indications of controlling behavior that you ought to consistently watch out for too.

While they may seem like two different things, being totally dependent on your partner and being constrained by your partner can frequently go connected at the hip. A controlling partner will frequently make you dependent to suit their needs: They'll get frantic if you spend time with companions, they don't do things you like to do, or they may even power you to cut binds with companions they don't care for.

It's important to recall that requiring an individual an excess of for the most part originates from fear, not love. When a partner makes their Significant other answerable for their own bliss, the need of having that validation nearly becomes like a dependence. They control their partner and it begins to turn into an emotional dependency because they fear losing their partner. While it will undoubtedly change over the span of a relationship, being horribly codependent can make you totally sacrifice your own character for your partner. Your self-esteem may even be dependent on the relationship without you in any event, acknowledging it. Perfect relationships are a decent equalization of dealing with the person just as making a relationship that is commonly fulfilling. If you're uncertain if your relationship is going a solid way or not, here are a few signs to watch to check whether you're in an emotionally dependent relationship.

One sign is that your happiness depends on your partner's mood. You attempt to ensure your partner is cheerful in any event, when it may make you miserable. It's OK to be thoughtful, but when you're possibly fulfilled

when your partner is content, it might mean you're a piece excessively dependent. It's as yet important to be your own individual with your own brain, else, you'll be hopeless all the time because you're continually stressed about how your partner is feeling. Try not to let your partner's temperament assume control over yours.

When you don't care to spend time with your loved ones is also another sign. You deliberately abstain from making arrangements with your loved ones and like to invest energy just with your lover. If not this, you spend time with your precious ones just when your partner is occupied elsewhere. You are gradually putting some distance between your companions and in the end, demolishing your public activity.

When you also can't seem to do anything with your partner. This shows you are too dependent on your partner as well. You won't let your significant other do anything without you. You end up rationalizing not going to things because your partner can't go with you. You scarcely observe your companions any longer and when you do, it's never independent. It's critical to keep up your own character for your emotional wellbeing, and having the option to do things independently is a major piece of that.

When your arrangements are dependent on your partner, regardless of whether it is going for a film, shopping for food, or getting away, you have gotten dependent on your partner for each seemingly insignificant detail. You begin rationalizing the moment you are relied upon to accomplish something without anyone else and you probably won't have acknowledged but you battle to make regular choices without including your partner.

Constantly looking for validation is another pointer that you are too dependent on. Your relationship has become your lone source of satisfaction and you need steady consolation from your partner to remain glad. You search for your partner's validation to feel satisfied and fulfilled in life and your mindset relies upon how your partner is feeling.

When you give up your needs for your spouse is another pointer to the fact that you're overdependent. It's entirely expected to need to take into account your partner's needs sometimes, but you have to meet your own also. When everything you do is give and don't receive anything consequently, the relationship can get unfortunate and imbalanced. You may wind up detonating eventually, and you may feel void inside because you've overlooked yourself for such a long time.

When you feel jealous when your partner gives another person a few moments of attention. You get distraught when your partner talks to, invests energy with, or helps others, especially when it's a close friend or a relative. You come up with idiotic reasons for why your partner shouldn't talk to every individual. You need their attention to be completely on you consistently, regardless of whether you know it's stinging their different relationships. It's fine to need some attention and validation, but permit your partner to sustain different relationships as well. Else, they'll become angry and disappointed.

You've begun to lose your personality. This is another sign you should beware of, your whole spotlight has shifted on your relationship and your reality rotates around it. You have changed your day by day calendar and lifestyle according to your partner's preferences. Possibly, you used to take strolls or meet companions in your extra time, but now you just play computer games or gorge on web arrangement because this is what your partner appreciates. Keep in mind, it is a great idea to be interested and engage in your partner's pastimes and zones of intrigue but not to the degree that you begin losing your own character.

## BECOMING EMOTIONALLY SELF-RELIANT

Generally, this manner of thinking begins in youth. We depend on our folks for our emotional needs — love, comfort, support, validation, and so forth. What's more, we don't regularly create emotional confidence aptitudes as children, because guardians (out of love for us) give a valiant effort to accommodate every one of these needs.

And afterward, we become grown-ups without having learned emotional independence. Thus we search for another person to fill our emotional needs. We search for the ideal partner, and will most likely experience a couple of separations, because, firstly, we're not emotionally independent, and as such, we do things that hurt our relationship, and also makes our partner behave in a similar way. If we're at any point hurt, we censor the other individual for hurting us. If they aren't there for us, we accuse them. If something terrible transpires, we become casualties, because you can't proceed onward with your life if somebody has planned something awful for you, isn't that so? However, there is a solution. There are approaches you can utilize to make you less Clingy In your relationship.

The first is to work on any trust issues you have. It can seem like an easy decision, but it's fantastically important to confide in your partner. If you don't confide in that person, at that point it will be difficult to let your partner have the space to be who the individual truly is. Not having trust in your significant other can cause the person in question to feel less sure about the relationship and lead to feelings of resentment. Trust is critical to keeping up a decent, long haul relationship that will satisfy both of you. Setting trust in your partner can mean anything from not continually asking where the person in question is during the day, to advising yourself that in any event, getting baffled with this new advance is useful for your relationship, in any event, when it doesn't appear as though it is.

Secondly, let people have their space. Love doesn't mean you and your partner should be appended at the hip. For many couples, a lot of closeness can put a strain on the relationship. While sharing— contemplations, feelings, space, whatever — is certainly acceptable in any relationship, an excess of sharing can cause your significant other to feel caught. Nobody wants to choke in a relationship. It's ideal to give your partner the space the person in question needs. That way, your partner is more averse to connect your relationship with negative feelings, which makes the relationship more grounded over the long haul.

Develop trust in yourself. Self-assurance can go far in guaranteeing that you feel great in a relationship. People with more self-assurance are more averse to stick to others as a method of validating themselves. Think about rehearsing positive reasoning and self-esteem. If you respect and love yourself, it makes it that much simpler for others to do likewise.

To become emotionally self-dependent, you need to concentrate on yourself. Set aside some effort to truly fixate your musings on yourself. It's stunning how much we can find out about ourselves and our feelings if we simply set aside the effort to consider things alone. Set aside some effort to center your contemplations internally. Time alone can truly help you feel focused and rested, but it can likewise show your significant other that you're not dependent on the person in question for joy. Dependency can prompt one partner to feel more capable in the relationship than the other, which can prompt serious problems later on.

In this journey of being self-reliant emotionally, you have to know how to manage your nervousness. If you're inclined to nervousness or nerves, it very well may be anything but difficult to go to your partner as an approach to facilitate that distress. However, this can cause your partner to feel excessively liable for your bliss and can be an irregular method to manage your feelings. Rather, take a stab at transforming that tension into something positive and steady, for example, an everyday custom or

movement. Essentially doing ongoing errands can ease on edge feelings and leave you with more positive vitality to place into the relationship. If you get yourself incessantly restless or with feelings that can't be managed effectively, address a specialist.

When one is in a codependent relationship, and depending intensely on the partner to satisfy their own bliss, they for the most part don't feel great about themselves. People in sound relationships find different outlets to satisfy them, regardless of whether it's their pastimes, their family, their activity, and so forth. But when your relationship doesn't include a sense of pride, it empowers awful behavior from your partner, and this could impact you to not feel great about yourself.

There are various approaches to mend from a codependent relationship. When you understand that you're in one, you can without much of a stretch find a way to beat it. It will require some investment and perhaps treatment, but the initial step is to acknowledge that you are surely codependent, and from that point, you can attempt to better yourself and your relationship.





## CONCLUSION

Communication is the main driver behind humankind, after all, if we can't communicate information and insight, how can we keep moving forward? Look at all the impacts of contact, from the day we are birthed to when we pass; our minds are full of contact. Either communication is verbal or visual everywhere we look at people, houses, vehicles, and everything else you can see or hear, they're all transmitting their own meaning. If this is what contact can do to the senses on an ordinary daily basis, then the effect of interaction in relationships cannot be overstated.

Consider how you're building a relationship. You see somebody who's catching your eye; you go to talk to them. Now I assure you that fantasy gives you your early bonding, but it is by interacting together and knowing about one another that formal attachment will become a relationship. While dating, you share your thoughts, and yes, you chat a little more; given that what you know about one another isn't unnecessarily upsetting, then you embark into a much more steady relationship, you just might eventually wind up marrying. Without the effect of dialogue in relationships, a relationship could never be established or developed.

Relationship communication is critical. When spouses have difficulties in a relationship, communication will be the first thing that will stop. It's always better to be silent than to get angry. When redeveloping love and marital relationships, much like interaction is the first one to stop, now it requires to be the first to commence. This will demand both persons to let their things slide and to throw a lot of caution at the wind. Rejuvenation in a relationship can't start before you talk. Reach an agreement that you're going to talk about anything and everything, and that you're going to listen, really listen. That doesn't mean you're going to agree with anything, which is perfectly normal.

Nevertheless, if you do not accept, do not contend, but the two of you need to respectfully discuss the topic and come up with a solution collectively. This requires a lot of hard work, but in a really brief period, both of you will feel happier, personally, and as a couple.

Get in the routine of paying attention to whatever your partner is saying. Not any kind of hearing you do when you're out or fall asleep at the table eating, but a unique kind of communication. Have you ever noticed your friend make a remark to a friend or relative about something they would want or need to do? You might have heard your boyfriend or husband say to a friend that they'd love some kind of tool. For no excuse at all, make an extra effort to get something for him. You may have overheard your wife or girlfriend talk about a massage they'd probably try. Again, for no reason, show a surprise to her. This goes to show that your friend is really paying attention to things that are really important to you.

Many of the population have never known how to talk. Without this ability, a person is disabled in a romantic relationship. The partners can not achieve intimacy without being able to express themselves and listen to others. Through improving your interpersonal skills, you and your spouse will be able to build and sustain caring, meaningful relationships between people who value each other.

Married people who don't strive to interact actively will face challenges when it comes to closeness, confrontation, and interpersonal development. Comprehending the inner world of your partner and having them understand yours is central to a true connection. If you're struggling to communicate verbally that's changing your relationship, then over time, you'll find that you're growing apart.

The lack of relationship communication cannot be overlooked, particularly in circumstances where you feel like you can't communicate effectively with your partner.

Communication ties you together, links you to each other's lives, introduces you to who they are and what makes them click, gives you history, a present, and a future. If you don't have communication within a relationship, you have nothing to tie you together. If you have nothing to tie you together, you have no relationship.

Communication in your relationship is a no brainer. Ask each other what you did on the day you went, who you saw. Life would be pretty dull if you weren't able to tell your partner such. Let's go a bit further, think about your dreams and aspirations. If your marriage is going to grow, you have to be on the similar page and have a similar long-term vision to work to ensure stability and permanence in your relationship. And then, at the heart of things, you need to be willing to share feelings, emotions, needs, and desires, major issues. Your partner needs to understand how and when to support you, and to guarantee that your intimacy requirements are satisfied, as your best friend, they should be the first person that you turn to in times of need. There's no getting away from it, communication has a major impact on your relationships.

As a couple, always try to talk with each other. Irrespective of how well you love and know each other, you didn't interpret your spouse's mind. We need to talk effectively to avoid any misconceptions that can cause hurt, frustration, dissatisfaction, or uncertainty.

It takes multiple individuals to always have a relationship, and each has various communication styles and preferences. Couples need to learn to communicate that best serves their marriage. Sustainable styles of communication involve practice and dedication. Communication is never going to be flawless all the time.

When you talk to your partner, attempt to: put aside time to talk, consider what you need to state, be clear about what you need to communicate, make your message understood, so your partner hears it precisely and understands what you mean, talk about what is going on and

how it influences you, talk about what you want, need and feel – use 'I' statements, for example, 'I need', 'I want' and 'I feel,' acknowledge duty regarding your own feelings, listen to your partner. Set aside your own contemplations until further notice and attempt to understand their aims, beliefs, needs and wants (this is called compassion), share positive feelings with your partner, for example, what you acknowledge and appreciate about them, and how important they are to you, know about your manner of speaking, arrange and recollect that you don't need to be correct always. If the issue you are having isn't unreasonably important, attempt to release the subject, or settle on a truce.

Be clear when speaking with your partner, so your message can be received and understood. Double-check your understanding of what your partner is stating.

Suppose you need to assemble a healthy relationship. In that case, it must be totally open and fair, you have to share your lives, which could feel somewhat meddlesome from the start, but your exertion will be more than rewarded by the nature of your relationship. One thing that I should mention and that it doesn't keep privileged insights! Not exclusively can your non-verbal communication part with you, but privileged insights have a method of being discovered, and that could decimate your relationship.

Indeed, even the most apparently perfect couples have their terrible days. You would prefer not to argue with your partner, but like it or not, that is what will occur. Presently here is the place communication can have a substantial effect on relationships. An issue comes up in your relationship; currently, you have two options, you can yell and shout at one another like a couple of children and accomplish nothing, or (and this is the place it gets radical) you can see that you have a problem, so both of you plunk down and attempt to figure out how to manage it.

When you manage issues, you are not hoping to score points, you are not going all out for a resolution that suits you best, and you are searching

for a compromise that gives the best outcome for your relationship.

Not many individuals know this, but the chances of your partner being clairvoyant are actually very thin. If you need them to know something at that point, TELL them, don't feel that they should know consequently, or drop unimaginably obscure clues with the expectation that they will understand what you mean. Try not to be reluctant to state something; if it is certifiable and you say it respectfully, your partner should have no problem with it. The questions can begin if you don't mention anything, or if you trust that your partner will say something while they are sitting tight for you, or if you overlook something and expect it to disappear. If you have an issue or a need and you make no mention of it, at that point, it won't go; it will deteriorate and lead to resentment because your partner ought to have known.

The effect of communication on relationships is gigantic; if you don't communicate, you won't have a relationship. Communication can unite you, it can help your relationship develop, and your love grows. It doesn't take a lot to talk and to share your life, you can increase, and a lot of further understanding and connection with your spouse, in addition to it, makes life much more fascinating. If you need a loving, stable relationship.



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