

degrees of **separation**

building resilience, independence and self esteem



Best practice *for relationships*

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- #1 Every day, before going to work, find out one thing from your partner that they are looking forward to that day; And vice versa ask your partner the same question whether they are going to work or not.
- #2 Have a hug every morning when you first wake up, or a gentle touch/stroke/good morning.
- #3 Do an appreciation each day – this gets harder! Every day say something appreciative about the other person: face to face, in a text, email or a message on the fridge!
- #4 Be inventive – don't just say I like your cooking; TRY...I love the way you put so much effort into making XYZ...; or I really like the green of your eyes. Don't be repetitive – e.g. say same thing each day – I like your cooking! Think hard and remember what it is you like them doing, being, e.g....offering to make you a cup of tea...? Noticing that xyz needs doing and just doing it...
- #5 Before you leave the house have another hug or even a kiss. Make it a six second hug or a three second kiss, and if you have kids, they will go crazy with excitement, plus you're teaching them great relationship skills for later in life, and hopefully your partner will get a little excited to and be looking forward to seeing you at the end of the day. It's a lovely connection to have before leaving each other for the day. At end of day, when you each come home, it's like a ship sailing into port; it should feel like a safe harbour. Don't go straight to the couch. Say hi to the kids and then go to your partner. Work out a routine that each of you will spend five minutes with each other catching up with the day's events. If they are peeling potatoes or doing something else, they should pause what they doing and connect by hugging or having a kiss – the longer the better. Make a cup of tea; glass of water/wine for you both, and sit with each other for 5 minutes without any distraction, you can off load about your day for 5 minutes with minimal interruption and the other person can talk about their day. The listener must do just that, nod, agree, just mirror, no need to give advice, listen, and ask questions – how was that? Then what?

Then stop....

At the end if you have a burning need to offer advice ask the other person 'hey are you interested in any advice'... but if you're tired and you don't want advice just say, "not now thanks". And the other person then has 5 minutes to share their day. Ten minutes in total is not a lot of time. It is called End of stress dialogue and it leads to more connection and communication.

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