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## TEN POSITIVE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

BY NATHAN FOX (MBACP)

### Communication

Communication is one of the most important parts of a strong relationship. When couples stop talking to each other, issues aren't addressed and the relationship stops growing. Vocalise your love and complement each other, talk about the bad instead of sweeping it under the rug. You need to be able to talk about your feelings openly and honestly, no matter how awkward or uncomfortable it feels. Working together and supporting each other will make for a longer-lasting and more fulfilling relationship.

### Respect

Respect your partner. Their time, thoughts, opinions, character and trust. It is easy to lose and hard to gain, keep in mind that it is a two-way street. If you want to be respected, respect your partner.

### Touch

Touch is an important part of intimacy. When we hold someone close to us and wrap our arms around them, we are saying that this person is the centre of our world. Touch shows that we care and are comfortable with being close to someone and we want them close to us.

### Time

It's not how much time you and your partner spend together, it's the quality of this time. If we spend hours sat on the sofa and we don't engage or acknowledge each other how can we have a meaningful or deep connection? Life is busy and time is precious but that's no excuse.

### Being apart

Time away from your partner can be just as important as time spent together. Yes, I know it sounds contradictory, but it's true. Spending time apart and being independent can help you to see what you have got, and to miss your partner



when they are not there. Autonomy and healthy boundaries can help to forge a long lasting relationship.

### Love Languages

How do we feel loved? Every person has their own way of feeling loved. They can be words of affirmation, receiving gifts, quality time, acts of service, and physical touch. We need to know our partner's language and learn to speak it. Tell your partner how you feel loved and find out how they do too. Then act on this to show your partner that they are appreciated. This will help you to show each other your love and stay connected.

### Positive vs. Negative

You both have good and bad points, you're both human. It's too easy to get caught up in negativity and forget the good qualities of your partner. Always try to remember the good qualities that first attracted you to your partner, even on a bad day.

### Choose Your Battles

You will have arguments, it's a fact every couple will at some point. Don't try to score points or bring up old arguments. Be honest, say what you feel and why you are upset. Allow your partner to do the same. Work to end the argument not keep it going and know when to compromise.

### Sex

Sex means different things to different people. Sex drive, high or low - what you like, what you don't. Talk to your partner and be open and honest. Sex can help to strengthen and deepen the intimacy between you. Don't let sex be a barrier to a flourishing relationship.

### Comparisons

Comparisons will always come up short. Other people's cars, jobs and homes. Social media can make it easy for us to compare relationships as well. The grass is not always greener and the happiest couples look at each other rather than comparing each other.

*Your relationship can have a big impact on your own mental health and self-esteem. A healthy relationship can help you to feel supported and connected and be a safe place to explore your independence. So what impact can an unhealthy relationship have?*

*If you feel like you want to talk about any issues raised in this article, here at Cornerstone we offer a free first introductory session, for you to talk about anything that is uncomfortable or difficult, in a safe, confidential space.*

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