

Developing a T.E.A.M. Mentality

Every intimate relationship goes through cycles—whether new or old—and one thing is certain: there always will be change involved in the process. It all comes down to how we handle change and the kind of energy that we want to create in a relationship with our partner. It is easy to get caught up in the story that we tell about ourselves and our partner. If anyone asked you about your relationship and you were genuinely honest, what story would you relay? What would be the positives and negatives?

If you want to rewrite your story and turn it into the one we *want* to be telling, there are some things you must first understand about the nature of a healthy, loving, and lasting relationship. The first thing you need to do is start seeing the relationship from a T.E.A.M. perspective, where there is a win-win mentality instead of a win-lose mentality. In our culture, we have been taught to value win-lose; however, if someone has to lose in this case then your relationship loses.

Creating a Relationship T.E.A.M.

Trust and Honesty:

Honesty is a vital part of a healthy relationship. Many people wear a mask to hide their deeper selves, both negative and positive. Our partner is one of the few people that will see us without that mask, exposing our fears, desires, hopes, weaknesses, and strengths. If we want to get the most out of a relationship, we must be truly honest about who we are, how we feel, and the nature of the relationship. At the same time, we must be open to allowing our partner to be truly honest with himself or herself and with us.

One of the things that destroys many relationships is an inability to trust. When most people think of breaking trust they think of infidelity. However, there are many other circumstances in which a breach of trust can do the same damage over time. For example, if your partner approaches you with a fear about the relationship or something that is impacting it, and you get defensive and react in a negative way, how does that affect trust? Is your reaction creating a safe place for the person to feel loved and not judged while being honest? If you and/or the other person do not feel a sense of trust in expressing baggage, fears, doubts, and insecurities then how will either of you grow past them?

Be open to hearing your partner's concerns and create time and space to talk about these sensitive issues. Be trustworthy by honoring what is shared and respecting their perspective. Listen as if your partner is a wounded child because with honesty and trust both of you can heal many previous wounds.

Trust can also come from following through with promises. For example, if you tell your partner you are going to do something or be somewhere at a specific time and neglect to do it then it starts planting the seeds of mistrust.

When you have trust and honesty in a relationship, you can be “real” and are able to communicate your needs.

Remember, neither of you are mind readers. The more honest you are and the deeper the level of trust that you both develop, the better you can understand each other's needs and wants and make the relationship blossom.

Emotional Health:

Studies show that while growing up we hear 30 negatives to each positive. Imagine all the belief systems we've developed that we must break away from in order to be our authentic selves. For many people the mind has been programmed to see the negative. It is important to rewire the brain and improve our emotional health.

Of course, there will be times when some negative things must be said, but when this happens wrap it up in a "positive sandwich." Always sprinkle in some positive when you have to be negative. A good way to develop a positive outlook is for you and your partner to sit down and each write out 30 things, big or small, that you like about each other and the relationship. When you are done, compare lists and then place them somewhere that you both can see them as a reminder of how you truly see each other at the core.

Thirty may seem like a lot but it allows the mind to think of the little things that sometimes go unnoticed.

Acceptance:

If you look at successful individuals in our history, there is almost always someone next to them that gave them the motivation and ability to be their authentic selves. For example, many people thought Henry Ford was crazy for his idea to create an automobile. However, his wife supported him and even worked diligently by his side, creating a true partnership that led him to successfully create the Model-T and change the world.

Sometimes our differences, if we can accept them, can make a relationship better. Okay, so some of the things may drive you crazy, but it may be that you only need a change in perspective. Is it really that bad? If it is then you may need to reconsider being in the relationship. If it is not, then you need to reconsider your perspective on it. One thing to remember is that at some point you decided to be with this person and accepted him or her, weaknesses and strengths included. Accept each other where you are at, and if change is needed, commit to mutual growth.

Mutual Respect:

It is surprising that many people often treat their significant other worse than they would a total stranger.

In an emotional situation, ask yourself—would I say or behave like this to a total stranger, a friend, or coworker? Some people may say "of course not, but this is different." How is it different? Is it because you know your partner better than anyone else? Do you feel that he or she is always going to be around or that they have to put up with it? Your intimate relationship should be your sanctuary, the place that you can go to feel safe from the outside world and the stress of everyday life. In other words, the relationship should not be a punching bag for life stressors, but rather the key to help you brush off those bad vibes. More importantly the person that you spend your life with should be treated *better* than how you would treat others.

Many times it is challenging to go back to mutual respect once a certain line of disrespect has been crossed. In this case, it takes making a conscious commitment between both partners to forgive and permanently change disrespectful behaviors.

Ask yourself this—if you were told that you or your partner was going to die in a week, how would you treat each other? Would you get caught up in trivial and insignificant arguments?

Is this problem more important than your relationship? If it's not, let it go. Remember that every successful company and sports team achieves excellence because the participants themselves are a TEAM. Isn't it time for the most important relationship that you will ever have, to be based on TEAM work?