



The Blue Wren Foundation Relationship Education Man-ual

10 top tips for men on how to create, build and maintain a healthy relationship

This is more generally for male-female relationships

The top 10 tips are:

- 1.** Find a common, shared relationship language that you can use to help you communicate in a more harmonious and clear way. Find and use words that are effective rather than triggers for conflict. Take out words such as ‘you always’, ‘when you’ and other blaming or accusatory words.
- 2.** Find and make time for regular ‘Relationship Meetings’. One hour per week is a good place to start. Do this at a time when you know that you will not be too tired and make sure that there are no distractions or interferences from children, other family members, phones or TV. Perhaps light a candle to honour the space. To do this you will most likely need to develop both a ‘Safety Contract’ and a ‘Relationship Meeting Agreement’ about when, where and how these meetings will take place.
- 3.** The Safety Contract is something that you must both develop. You do this by writing down your own needs first, discussing them together and then agreeing to them. The agreement is agreed to with words like – “I agree to try my very best to stay within the agreements that we have created”. The word ‘try’ is very important, as that really is all we can do. Making promises that might get broken is a sure road to conflict. It is important to both feel safe when communicating and sharing.
- 4.** Create a ‘Relationship Meeting Agreement’ with your partner. When and where are you going to meet and for how long? Put it in your diaries and keep the meeting appointment. This is level one importance. Everything works around this. You have to make this a priority. If you do not, what are you both saying or expressing about the relationship? This one hour a week can be the most difficult hour to find! You will have to be adamant and strong and even demanding to make it happen. If, and when, you get really brave, you could always meet naked in the bath tub! It’s very challenging, but it will elevate your relationship if you can do it.
- 5.** Develop and step into your 51%. This is all about stepping up into a more dominant and active role in the relationship. This is about you stepping up into your 51% so that your partner (female) can drop into being her 49%. For clarity this is not about stepping out of equality, it is about developing it. From an archetypal perspective, when men stand in their 51% and women drop into their 49% the woman feels more protected and loved and can be more receptive and open. The man, in his 51%, becomes the protector. These archetypes are important in a male-female relationship. With same sex relationships, the balance will depend on the two people in the relationship, but it can be explored and put into place to best support the relationship. This 51% is really all about putting our words into action!

6. Dating your partner is an important factor in keeping your relationship healthy and vibrant. Make the time and organise time out with your partner. This is all part of the 51% process. Do not leave it up to her. This is a role for the man! And surprise her occasionally. Take her out to her favourite café or restaurant or to the movies or the theatre or to a sporting event that she likes. If you can, lock in one or two hours per week or fortnight, or better still, a whole morning or afternoon, it will be well received and worth it, as long as you can be with each other in a good space.

7. Romance and Intimacy. This is not to be confused with sex. This is all about pampering and nurturing and showing love and affection. This is about the flowers and chocolates, the hugs and cuddles, kind and loving words and her head on your chest moments. This is about letting her know that you care and love her. This is where you are her Knight in Shining Armour and she is your beautiful Goddess.

8. Sexuality is generally a big part of a healthy relationship and getting it right and making your partner feel safe, loved and satisfied is not always an easy task. To create, and have a healthy sex life in a relationship takes effort and work along with some courage, patience and vulnerability. Once again, it is the man's role to initiate and get things moving. The fantasy of a woman initiating is fine, but it is not her major role. It is yours. If you wish to have a healthier, more active sex life it is up to you to get it happening. One again, from an archetypical perspective, this is a male led role; something for you to initiate. Oftentimes it is the fear of rejection or the fear of performance that stops us from initiating sex with our partners. This is especially true if there has been little or no sexual activity for some time.

9. Fun and games are such a great way to keep things light in a relationship. Find the time and the energy to do this. Find games that you both enjoy. Even a good game of Rummy or Snap can be fun! It is generally just about making the effort to invite your partner to join you and then actually doing it. You might want to find a sport or activity that you can share and have fun with. Have fun with your partner deciding what it is you would like to do together and then do it! You can even make driving and travelling more fun by playing fun games like 'Bingo' (Say 'Bingo' when you see a yellow vehicle!).

10. The final tip is to learn not to react to your partner. This one can be very challenging. Verbal, emotional and physical reactions come from many things; from our insecurities, frustrations, fears, doubts, lack of confidence, past relationships, lack of good listening skills, tiredness, boredom and even control. Find a way to work on this and practice it every day! Presence is the key thing here.

This Man-ual has been developed by Adrian Hanks, the Founder and CEO of the Blue Wren Foundation, from his work with many 100's of men in men's circles and men's groups over the past two decades, his work as a counsellor and psychotherapist and from his own experiences, challenges and insights from his short, medium and long term relationships.

If you would like any further information or support with any of these 10 tips, or with anything else related to your relationship, please contact the Blue Wren Foundation.

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