

CONNECTING - SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

John Gottman, author of *The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work*, has found that even spending 5 minutes of quality time per day can improve a marriage.

The more connections we make by depositing in our mate's emotional bank account, the richer our relationship will be. Here are some ways to CONNECT.

1. Cuddling at the most important time of the day.

- Most couples cuddle in the evening -- but it's a great idea to cuddle in the morning before you leave each other.

2. Ask each other one simple question before you head out the door. -- "Anything going on special today?"

- Gottman discovered that talking about the daily details of our lives is just as important to couples as sharing hopes, dreams and fears with each other.
- Asking about the nitty-gitty of what's going on is a great way to build understanding and rapport.
- Then when you're together at the end of the day ask how that special something went. This connects you!

3. Sharing what you like about each other.

- If there's something you appreciate about your spouse, from his/her parenting skills to the way he/her painted the garage last month, speak up!
- Praise works magic. It says to people that their spouse loves them. And knowing they're loved makes people more willing to work out their differences.

4. Doing small kindnesses for each other

- The good we do for our partner tends to come back to us. **"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." THIS WORKS FOR MARRIAGE TOO!**
- It's so easy to take each other for granted! So pick up that special dessert or clip articles you think your spouse might like.

5. Use this instant stress buster -- share your struggles.

"One of the most important things we've discovered about happy couples, say Gottman, is that they spend five minutes griping to each other about things that stressed them out during the day, taking turns talking. This lowers stress and allows them to enjoy their evening together."

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