

Timeless Transformations

Happy Valentine's Day – Thoughts about Long Lasting Relationships

It being Valentine's Day, I thought I would share my thoughts about love and relationships. After all, I have been married to your dad for going on 33 years. That is an amazing accomplishment. I hope you can appreciate that as much as I do. Lord knows we have had our ups and downs! I can tell you it has been through a lot of work, dedication, and commitment. I can also tell you that I've made a lot of mistakes. There are a lot of things I would have done different but that's just part of the growing experience in a relationship. I thought today I would just share some small things that I believe can make a difference. Maybe I can jump start your relationships by 30 years and yours can be greater than mine and your dad's. That is what I am here for – to share, support, and help you in your life's journey. I wish I would have had someone to help me on a deeper level..... I hope these things will help you in your relationships if not now, in the future.

Don't think the grass is greener on the other side. Regardless if it is a friend, a husband, a boyfriend, or coworker, you may look at the other person and say, I would be happier if I were spending time with someone else. When you think about any relationship, in the beginning, there is such euphoria and joy in the relationship. The relationship is fun and exciting. And then think about when things start to fade. The relationship begins to be the same ole same ole thing. What happened to that spark, the euphoria? Where did it go? That is because we adapt to the person. As time goes on, you get used to the person and your level of happiness goes back to the way it was. You get bored. Then you think something is wrong with the person. There's nothing wrong with the person, you just have to figure out how to keep the relationship on a high.

Reawaken appreciation for the other person. When we feel grateful, joy is awakened in our heart. Think about why you fell in love with the person in the first place, or what you originally liked about the other person. Think about the times where you have had closeness. Remember the strengths of the other person. This is how you awaken gratitude. It is simple and it is powerful. We have to remember those things. Life is about recollection. It is about recalling what is true and what we already know to be true. It is the same with appreciation. You have to recapture appreciation. What I do is imagine what my life would be like without that person. Subtract that person from your life. What would you have? What would you be missing?

Add variety and newness to your relationship. It is easy to do the same thing: the constant, repetitive thing. This is what causes adaptation to occur; when we do that same old thing. That is why we need to inject variation and innovation. There is passionate love – this is what gets you together – it is fun and exciting. Then there is a companionship love - when you really like the other person. Find things that keep your relationship interesting and fun, but also know the difference between the different types of love.

Inject an element of surprise into your relationship. When the relationship is new, everything is new. Everything is a surprise from conversation, to experience, to family, to all the things you don't know about the other person. Over time, you lose the surprise. How do you keep this element of surprise in the relationship? It's hard. I believe you have to get involved in activities that cause surprises to happen. You have to look for something surprising to happen. You have to look for things that are different about the other person. This is a tough one. And when there isn't a surprise, you have to have patience that a surprise may be coming in the next day or the next week. That is what commitment in a relationship is all about. It is when you know you are in the relationship for the long term.

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Celebrate the other person's good news. Couples are more successful when they share in another's good news. A predictor of a good relationship is how the other responds to your good news. How enthusiastic are they? Showing enthusiasm and asking questions shows you are interested in their life. If the other brings good news whether about work or anything at all, celebrate and be interested in their good news.

See the best in your partner. Support them and see the ideal in them. A relationship is about supporting the other person and bringing out the best in one another, even if they don't know it yet. Try and not be judgmental. Each of us is in a state of growth. We are in a relationship that is awakening and evolving. Rather than judge, just look for the good and ignore the rest.

Show the other person affection with touch. We know from studies that when we are touched, whether it is just a hug or holding hands, it creates a high. It creates security. When infants aren't touched, they are afraid. When infants receive touch, they feel secure. It is human nature. When you touch your partner, you are helping your partner to reach an internal sense of security. Sit closer to one another. Pat their back. Squeeze their hand. Give them a hug. It gives comfort and peace. Many relationships go astray because of this one small missing touch. Don't underestimate it!

Remember, all relationships are tied to the inner you. Love yourself and have confidence in yourself so that you don't allow the other person to "push your buttons." When some of the romance and the infatuation wears off, adjust. Don't attempt to mold the other person. Don't use guilt and blame to control each another. Conflicts begin around assumptions that each have made about how the relationship was going to look or how each was going to be. Focus on moving beyond control, and just allow the relationship to unfold.

Be more tolerant and accepting. If mistakes were made in the past, forgive and move on. Nagging and dragging up the past will damage and sever the relationship! Nothing good will EVER come from this. This one thing will damage the relationship faster than anything else. It may push the other person so far away that they will never come back.

Don't criticize the other. This means you disapprove of them. This makes them feel like you are judging and attacking them. Love is not based on conditions. When you criticize, you are placing conditions on the other person. Especially, never criticize the other in front of other people. This sends the relationship into a state of hopelessness and embarrassment.

Approach your differences from a more positive perspective. Release old expectations that can't be met. Accept each other for where you are in the current state. Don't give attention to the negative rather try and understand what might be behind the negative. Don't see the faults. Just put your energy into being more compassionate and understanding.

Once you can clear out of all of these things - you are left with pure unconditional love. This is where there is an acceptance, compassion, and caring. This is when the relationship is beautiful. This is how I hope each of you will live your life with the one that you love. May your relationships be long lasting forever and ever.

Happy Valentine's Day! I love you more than all the hearts in the world - Mom

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