

Planning Together in your Relationship



Planning together strengthens commitment and gives your relationship a shared sense of purpose and direction. If you both have something to work toward, you are less likely to feel defeated or “bogged down” by day-to-day difficulties and irritations. Even more importantly, your relationship will be the result of what you both need and want, as opposed to what you settle for.

Planning and setting goals for your relationship begin with realizing that, although we can't control everything that happens in a relationship, we can control the attitude we have toward it. If we believe that happiness is not within our grasp, we are sabotaging our chances for success. But if we believe we can build a satisfying and exciting life together, we will more likely get what we want.

It is also important to realize that a satisfying and exciting relationship is never accidental. It is a commitment to spending quality time together to get in touch with what we need and what we want. So often we get caught up in the daily routine and lose sight of what we truly desire. This is why sitting down and planning what we want to accomplish together is so important.

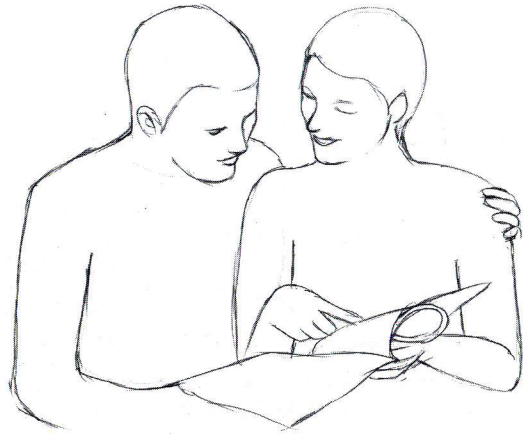
Why is it important to define our individual goals when planning our life together?

Before deciding on goals that will support your relationship, you need to get clear about what you want as individuals. Do you want to change jobs? Do you want to travel? Do you want to further your education?

You need to know what each of you wants before you can fully commit yourselves to the goals you develop together. You need to take into account different areas of your lives – personal (learning how to play the piano),

financial (owning a home?), career (becoming supervisor of the department), etc. This is not to say that you will be able to get everything you desire, but if it is on the table then you will feel better about whatever compromises you may need to make.

Realize that a relationship can't give you everything you need and it is important to balance the goals for your relationship with your personal goals and life plans.



What are some general goals that support a happy and successful relationship?

For a relationship to be happy and successful, we need to have a sense of belonging. We need to feel that we are loved, valued and understood, and that our unique gifts and capabilities will thrive. Here are five positive goals that foster good relationships:

- To make our relationship a priority.
- To accept personal responsibility for how we behave.
- To cooperate.
- To contribute to the relationship.
- To encourage and respect each other.