

3 Keys to Fixing your **R**elationship





Fixing Relationships

3 Keys to Resolving Relationship Problems and Recreating Happiness in your Couple or Marriage - by Michael Haggstrom

“Unresolved relational issues will eventually override the good.”

All couples can struggle with communication. In the beginning it can be more about negotiating each other's preferences and ways of doing things. Later on it can be because life gets busy and we lose touch with one another as friends.

Our happiness in a caring relationship depends on our ability to grow our friendship in the beginning stages of the relationship then to maintain the friendship throughout life's challenges and busyness. Here are 3 steps that can help in achieving this:

I. Don't bury the problems

Keep your heart free of grievances

When things get tough we tend to avoid certain issues. It feels safer to not bring them up anymore in order to stop fighting or arguing. So we put on a happy face as we bottle up the unresolved problems and do our best to focus on the positives.

Within itself, this is healthy. We often have to choose to see there are a lot more positives in the relationship than negatives. The challenge though is that over time those unsettled issues cause bitterness and resentment. Over the years this grows to a point where everything our partner does or says can start to irritate or annoy. Long-term unresolved relational issues will eventually override the good that we



have tried so hard to focus on. The sooner we attempt to work on the hard issues the better as this leaves little breeding ground for resentment to build up, keeping our heart free of grievances.

2. Stop the superficial fixes

Instead, use each problem as a means for greater intimacy

As human beings we tend toward fixing what is not working with a strong sense of urgency. Problems make us uncomfortable. This is great for a problematic car, a difficulty at work or a needed repair around the house. But when it comes to relationships we can't take the same simplistic approach.

I tell my clients that each problem in a relationship is an opportunity to learn more about each other and ourselves; about our preferences, our personalities, our values, our likes and dislikes. Compatibility is learned, not innate. If we can become more at ease with the challenges we face as a couple without panicking or turning them into a power struggle, we can use them intelligently to discover invaluable aspects of one another that can lead us to a greater level of intimacy.

3. Don't be too stubborn

Make your best attempt to discuss problems with an open mind

When I got married my wife's uncle gave a short speech. He said that when we get an impasse in resolving conflicts we should still continue to view our partner as an intelligent human being, even though they don't see things our way; they are not evil, stupid or intentionally being malicious toward us. They are just different. He went on to say that if you take any two people and have them live in close proximity they are bound to have conflicts. We as individuals by nature, hold to freedom of emotion, of thought and of will. It's the way we're made.

People have the right to their own opinions and preferences. It is often the mindset we bring into our arguments that will determine the outcome. Being open-minded and accepting are the first steps to more loving communication. This doesn't mean conversation can't be impassioned and vibrant though. It should be authentic and may be even somewhat heated, but within that context make your best attempt at being accepting and appreciative of your partner's right to be unique.

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