

Make Eye Contact...

When it comes to marriage and relationships, one of the biggest “buzz words” out there is communication, and rightly so. Communication is a lot more than simply spoken words; it’s an intangible connection, where two separate individuals connect on mutual ground. While there’s hardly a soul out there who doesn’t understand the importance of verbal communication, there are a great many that overlook the absolute necessity of non-verbal communication. And in the world of non-verbal communication, perhaps the most essential form is eye contact.

Travel back in time to the first time you met your mate. How did you make that first connection? Establish that first band of intimacy? More than likely, you did it through eye contact. Perhaps you sought them out in a room full of people, and the moment your eyes met, something clicked. It’s no great surprise: for centuries poets and wise men and women have shared with us the importance of the eyes...

“A friend’s eye is a good mirror.” – Celtic Proverb.

“The face is the mirror of the mind, and eyes without speaking confess the secrets of the heart.” – Saint Jerome (374 AD – 419 AD)

“Men trust their ears less than their eyes.” – Herodotus (484 BC – 430 BC)

“My eyes are an ocean in which my dreams are reflected.” – Anna M. Uhlich

However, despite the wisdom of the ages, many men and women still struggle to make the important connection that eye contact offers. Indeed, in some cultures, making eye contact was avoided because of the powerful emotions eye contact entails. When you make eye contact with your husband or wife, for just a moment, you are able to cover the distance that inevitably separates you, and you’re then able to see and feel the world much as they do. The veil that separates you is momentarily torn, truly allowing two hearts to meld into one.

Here are a few important facts and tips to empower you to make that connection:

- Did you know that true eye contact rarely lasts longer than three or four seconds? That's because during eye contact, a highly emotional link is established. The unspoken thoughts and emotions are so strong that one or both of you are bound to experience a powerful urge to look away. Don't resist this natural reaction, it's completely normal and okay. Continuing to hold your partner's gaze past this point can go beyond simple eye contact and into the realm of staring them down.
- While you're making eye contact with your partner, remember to smile. Eye contact without smiling can leave your mate feeling insecure and uncomfortable. Now, that doesn't mean you have to plaster a phony smile on your face throughout the entire moment or conversation – simply punctuate this intimate connection with an occasional loving smile.
- When you're making eye contact with your spouse, try to mirror the emotions that are expressed in your partner's eyes. When you do this, you're doing more than communicating; you're offering intimacy, sympathy and empathy – all very powerful components to a dynamic relationship.
- Do you wonder what you're risking if you don't make eye contact? Failure to make or establish eye contact with your mate can send a host of negative messages, namely distraction, shame, fear or the feeling that you're hiding something. Each of these negative messages, over time, can begin to erode the trust that you've established with one another.

In a world where everyone is looking for the magic formula to save marriages and keep relationships healthy and alive, be careful not to overlook the simple things. Unlike a vacation to Europe or regular visits to a therapist or counselor (neither of which is guaranteed to work), the simple act of gazing into your lover's eyes doesn't require you to go anywhere, do anything or spend any money. And the fruits of this simple intimate connection will be a priceless treasure, sure to strengthen and sustain your marriage.

With a little work, it truly can!

Kathy Stafford, Relationship Coach

“I show singles how to get married and couples how to STAY married”

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