

Lasting Love

Everyone falls in love one time or another in their life, but somehow it just doesn't last...why? Falling in love is easy; staying in love takes two committed partners. Look at it this way... "In Love" is not the same as "Real Love". Real love is when you are dedicated to the growth of another and when you help create an environment in which your partner flourishes and becomes even more than they knew they could be. A relationship should enhance you; it should not define you.

When you love someone, you have to allow him or her to be who they are. You must respond to them in a loving and understanding way to promote more loving feelings.

To gain a long-lasting relationship you must have commitment. This means you remain committed to the relationship even when you are angry, hurt or bored. These feelings are natural. You have to remember to work to change those feelings to enhance your relationship. All relationships have their ups and downs; the key is to change the down times to more positive togetherness.

Men and women are different in more than one aspect. Men build on relationships with activities and women through conversation. Couples must learn to give and take. This means that men need to learn to open up and women must find a likable activity or two to do with their significant other.

How can you keep a luxuriant relationship?

- ◆ **Fall in love over and over and over again.** Make a conscious decision to be in love and act in love.
- ◆ **Remember the good times.** Treat your partner the way you did when you first fell in love. Take a stroll down memory lane and plan an activity or visit place you both used to enjoy.
- ◆ **Build compatibility.** Take turns planning activities to do together. Plan your favorite pastime, along with some new exciting events. Don't complain; remember you get to choose the next time.
- ◆ **Stay in the moment.** Keep your mind on track. Be part of what is going on when you are together.
- ◆ **Security helps your partner feel more loved.** Compliment, praise, give a hug. Small gestures mean a lot in a lasting relationship.
- ◆ **Take time to plan for sex.** Spontaneity is great but take time to plan for romance or a playful activity. Good sex does not just happen, like everything else it takes time and planning.
- ◆ **Physical appearance is important.** Take time together to stay in shape. Remember it is natural with aging to have some changes. Enjoy the fact that you have the chance to age with someone you love.
- ◆ **Make decisions together.** The two of you are a team. When making big or small decisions, you must be willing to compromise. Remember that two heads are better than one.
- ◆ **Solve problems together.** Replace the blame with solutions.
- ◆ **They can't read your mind.** You may think you know, but you shouldn't assume. You may think they should know, but do they.... how could they? Always clarify yourself, and don't be afraid to ask.
- ◆ **Fight by appointment only.** Schedule a limited time to discuss any conflicts or problems. Fight fair; stay on the issue at hand and don't bring up the past. It is easier to talk and work things out when you don't feel ambushed.
- ◆ **Allow your partner space.** Even in the closest of relationships, everyone needs time alone. This allows your partner to grow. Make sure if you need some space to let your partner know ahead, so they might plan something special, too. Make sure that when you come back together that you have planned something special, even if it is just to cuddle. Let your partner know you missed them. Open up and tell them; "I missed you, I am so glad I'm home" and "I love you" along with an added simple gesture like a hug, kiss or a gentle caress.