



## 5 Habits of Deeply Connected Couples

For decades, the Gottman Relationships Research Institute has been studying what makes good relationships. They discovered 5 fundamental habits that happy couples use to turn toward each other. These are:

- Continuously learning about your partner
- Sharing intimate knowledge about yourself
- Constant positive interactions
- A shared philosophy
- Reinforced your commitment

### 1. Continuously learning about your partner

You can never really know another person, no matter how long you've been together. There will always be memories that your partner has that you cannot know. But you can get to know your partner more by asking deep questions.

A few questions to ask your partner to get to know them more deeply:

- What was your first experience with the death of a pet or loved one?
- What was the happiest/saddest/most frightening moment of your childhood?
- Where would you be and what would you be doing if you never met me?
- Why do you believe what you believe?
- Who has been the most important influence on your life?
- What are your personal goals for this year and how can I help you achieve them?
- How can I be a better partner to you?

### 2. Sharing intimate knowledge about yourself

Invite your partner to learn about your personal, private aspects of yourself. Intimate knowledge shared with a partner can include 'shared secrets, interpersonal rituals, bodily information, awareness of personal vulnerability and shared memory of embarrassing situations.'

Deeply connected partners have a shared language of endearments for each other, or special ways of touching each other that convey meaning or give pleasure to the other. Inside jokes, pet names, and playful teasing are ways that couples connect to each other on an intimate level.

### 3. Constant positive interactions

Communication is a very important two-way street. Listening is a gift that you give to your partner when you are fully available to hear their words and the emotion behind it. Play is a choice that you make to have fun with your partner.

Both listening and play contribute to deeply connected couple-hood. Imagine yourself not only being heard and understood on a meaningful level, but also having fun while that interaction took place with your partner. You would feel happy, loved, and supported.

Active listening is a lost art. Rather than giving your partner half of your attention, face them and listen intently to what they are saying. This is your beloved speaking to you. Treat them with the compassion that you also deserve.



Deeply connected couples spread joy as often as possible to their partner. In a study of relationship health and longevity by the Gottman Relationships Research Institute, researchers found that the use of humour or affection during conflict was essential to the health of the relationship.

#### **4. A shared philosophy**

Deeply connected couples know that each person is capable of change over their lifetimes. What rarely changes about a person are their deeply-held core beliefs. Deeply connected couples share these beliefs, morals and values, which enhances the depth their relationship because they connect to each other on a meaningful level.

#### **5. Reinforced commitment**

Trust is one of the most important factors for deeply connected couples. Connected partners take every opportunity to demonstrate to their spouse that they will protect their feelings. This demonstration of trust deepens their commitment to each other.

*Betrayal is not in the language of committed couples.* Each partner protects the boundaries of the other person. By keeping their partner's intimate details secret, they demonstrate trust to their partner.

Deeply connected couples see every interaction with another person as an opportunity to betray or protect their partner, and they always choose to protect their other half. Trust is not always about monogamy. Deeply connected couples show their care for their partner's heart by refraining from paying extra attention to someone that their partner might see as a romantic rival.

[Excerpt from the Gottman Institute]

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