

in marriages, one being the busy lifestyle of contemporary couples. As a matter of fact, many modern couples are now called “DINS,” which is an acronym for “Double Income, No Sex.”

What can the “DINS” and others like them do to keep their fires burning brightly and stay connected timelessly? They must make being together a high priority in their busy schedules. This means PLANNING for their physical intimacies and PROTECTING THAT TIME, otherwise it probably won’t happen. Make a date and put it on the calendar. Set aside time to be together to connect emotionally. Then cuddle, kiss and caress. Concentrate on being with your partner and on communicating desires and needs. Let whatever happens happen. Spontaneity is fine when used as, “icing on the cake.” However, MAKING TIME FOR(E) PLAY AND OMITTING THE (E), works best in long term relationships.

Tip #5 Be Creative

It is a challenge to keep the flame of love kindled in long term marriages or relationships. One way to do this is to be creative. This means doing anything that creates connection and recreates some of the old feelings that may be buried in the past. What couples can do to facilitate this process is only bound by one’s experiences and imagination. *One suggestion is to change the environment since couples can’t readily change their partners.* This may include making love in different places inside or outside one’s home. It may also include creating erotic adventures and fantasies by role playing different characters, changing one’s body in various ways, dressing up, playing games, using toys... The list is endless.

One can also make love in different ways by going beyond techniques. This means not always following a set pattern while making love, which makes sex stale and boring. Adopt Taco Bell’s philosophy and “spice things up by thinking outside of the bun!” Take a risk and try new behaviors as long as both partners agree. Focus on touching and on the senses rather than on sexual techniques and even make intercourse optional. Have a sense of humor and have fun.

Tip#6 Appreciate the Process

As relationships mature with time, sexual goals are sometimes unattainable. When goals are set that can’t easily be met, sex can become frustrating and seem like work. The end result is often sexual avoidance and sexual disconnection from one’s partner. This can also lead to emotion disconnection in the worst case scenario. The antidote to this problem is to learn to appreciate the process and eliminate the goals. This means de-emphasizing intercourse and concentrating on the experience of “being” with your partner, rather than the goal (of intercourse). The paradox is, the more intercourse is de-emphasized, the more likely it is to occur as a natural outgrowth of relaxation, comfort and physical pleasure between partners. Even if intercourse doesn’t or can’t occur, without goals, there are no failures. With this in mind, couples can stay loving timelessly

Timely Tips for Timeless Relationships

A Guide to More Fulfilling Long Term Relationships

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Has the spark gone out of your relationship? Although some people joke about this subject, it is not a laughing matter. The cooling of a relationship can sometimes lead to its untimely demise. This sad situation might be avoided and your relationship enhanced by following these timely tips.

Tip #1 Get off to a Good Start

All solid relationships are based on true love. It is important to differentiate between true love and romantic love and not count on romance to last forever:

Romantic love has been called “Limerence” by author Dorothy Tennoy and this term will be used here. Limerence is described as the early stages of attraction or infatuation in a relationship, during which time we typically see no faults in our new partner. At this stage, we are likely to be blinded and overwhelmed by our feelings. We see our partner “through rose colored glasses,” and feel ready to bond with someone we really do not know. Partners are often obsessed with each other and, to the exclusion of others, want to be together all the time. Even a shopping trip to buy a toilet plunger can be an exciting and meaningful event! Limerence usually includes erotic passion, but not always. If sexual involvement does occur, it is usually exciting and frequent. Novelty is a powerful aphrodisiac. Our brains become saturated with chemicals that act as amphetamine-like “uppers,” causing us to feel intoxicated and alive. Our hormones also work on “over-drive,” creating hypersexual behaviors and “the urge to merge.” Quick arousal and intense sexual (and emotional) feelings for our partner are often part of this picture of limerence.

This is the experience of “being in-love,” but it is not true love!

The shelf life for this stage is no more than 36 months, depending on the frequency of togetherness. Couples that spend more time together usually have a shorter limerence. Limerence is thought to fade because people cannot function for long at this high level of arousal and because our brains probably develop a “tolerance” to these chemicals that drive our feelings. Eventually partners return to what are their “normal” levels of functioning, and with that, their “normal” levels of sexual desire.

It is very sad when a partner mistakes the intense feelings of limerence for true love and then ends the relationship because of wrongly assuming that love has gone, as some of the passion fades over time. So then, what is true love?

Defining true love is difficult because every one has a personal understanding of love that is based on his or her biology and on a lifetime of experiences that shape in influence how affection is perceived and expressed. True love often grows out of limerence. Sometimes true love grows more slowly skipping limerence altogether. In general, it can be said that true love grows over time, sometimes out of limerence, sometimes not, and is composed of many facets that cement and sustain a relationship. Some of the components of a lasting love are kindness, honesty and fidelity, humor,

friendship, playfulness, and most importantly trust and respect. True love entails being able to continually meet each other’s needs and stay connected as a team without losing a sense of one’s personal identity and positive self-esteem. Partners should be “on the same page,” or at least on “the same chapter” in communicating their commitment and affection so that both feel loved and cared for by the other. Although a bit cliché, true love is like a garden that needs to be tended, weeded and watered frequently or it will wither and die.

Tip #2 Foster Intimacy

What post-limerent couples need to count on to sustain their loving relationship over time is the development of greater mutual intimacy. Many couples profess to want more intimacy but many have little idea what this really means. Intimacy should never be equated only with sex. In our society it is common to make this mistake because people commonly use the word, “intimacy” to connote sexual behavior. However, although intimacy has physical components, such as touching, hugging, snuggling as well as sex, it also has important emotional components as well. The latter involves the willingness to be totally self-disclosing, at the risk of being vulnerable, and in exchange, the ability to be accepting and respectful of a partner’s honest disclosure. In other words, it means saying how you honestly think and feel without worry of being judged. Timing is key and using discretion in wording is also important to avoid hurt feelings. In addition to keeping communication open, intimacy involves spending time together and interacting in meaningful ways. The neat thing about intimacy is that it facilitates sexual connection. It is especially important for most women (also for men) to feel emotionally connected to their partner before they can feel sexually interested in him or her.

Tip #3 Show Your Affection

Affection can mean any thing from hand holding to love making. The important point here is to remember that most people have different ways of feeling affection and expressing affection, which could lead to feeling loved or unloved and unappreciated if partners don’t clearly understand each other’s intents. It is not uncommon for men to use sexual intimacy as a way of expressing and feeling loved. The feeling of closeness obtained through sexual contact is not easily obtained by other means of communication for many men. Most women commonly require “words of love” or other verbal exchanges of feelings to feel affectionate and connected to their partner. Affection takes many forms that are unique to each individual and often to each gender. A good rule of thumb is be open, giving and affectionate on an on-going basis and do “whatever works” to enable your partner to feel loved as he or she requires.

Tip #4 Make Time For(e) Play

Many people believe that making love should be spontaneous. That is a mistake. Spontaneity may be the name of the game during limerence, but like limerence, it decreases with time. There are many reasons for the decline of spontaneity