

A Soulful Relationship

By Reverend Ronald McFadden

If you're not married yet, share this with a friend. If you are married, share it with your spouse or other married couples and reflect on it. An African proverb states, 'Before you get married, keep both eyes open, and after you marry, close one eye.'

Before you get involved and make a commitment to someone, don't let lust, desperation, immaturity, ignorance, pressure from others or a low self-esteem make you blind to warning signs. Keep your eyes open, and don't fool yourself that you can change someone or that what you see as faults are not really important.

Once you decide to commit to someone, over time their flaws, vulnerabilities, pet peeves, and differences will become more obvious. If you love your mate and want the relationship to grow and evolve, you've got to learn to close one eye and not let every little thing bother you. You and your mate have many different expectations, emotional needs, values, dreams, weaknesses, and strengths. You are two unique individuals who have decided to share a life together.

Neither of you are perfect, but are you perfect for each other? Do you bring out the best of each other? Do you compliment and compromise with each other, or do you compete, compare, and control? What do you bring to the relationship? Do you bring past relationships, past hurt, past mistrust, past pain?

You can't take someone to the altar to alter him or her. You can't make someone love you or make someone stay. If you develop self-esteem, spiritual discernment, and 'a life', you won't find yourself making someone else responsible for your happiness or responsible for your pain.

Manipulation, control, jealousy, deceitfulness, neediness, and selfishness are not the ingredients of a thriving, healthy, loving and lasting relationship. Seeking status, sex, wealth, and security are the wrong reasons to be in a relationship.

Q. What keeps a relationship strong?

- Communication,
- Intimacy (not sex)
- Trust
- A sense of humor
- Sharing household tasks
- Some getaway time without business or children
- Daily exchanges (a meal, a shared activity, a hug, a call, a touch, a note)
- Sharing common goals and interests.
- Leave a nice message on their voice mail or send a nice e-mail.
- Growth is important. Grow together, not away from each other, giving each other space to grow without feeling insecure.
- Allow your mate to have outside interest. You can't always be together.
- Give each other a sense of belonging and assurances of commitment.
- Don't try to control on another.
- Learn each other's family situation.
- Respect his or her parents regardless
- Don't put pressure on each other for material goods.
- Remember for richer or for poorer.

If these qualities are missing, the relation will erode as resentment, withdrawal, abuse, neglect, dishonesty, and pain will replace the passion.

"Nurture your mind with great thoughts, for you will never go any higher than you think." The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of God stands forever. Isaiah 40:8.

You should always try to be a little more kind to each other than necessary. The difference between 'United' and 'Untied' is where you put the 'i'. Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.