

21 Relationship Rules for Couples

by Dr. Orville E. Easterly - *Life Source, Inc. Roseville, CA*
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1. Out of all the people in the world you could be with today, who did you choose? Remember how special your mate is.
2. No one is more invested in my success and happiness than my mate. Therefore, my mate is not my enemy, even when my mate disagrees with me.
3. Seek to understand more than to be understood. It isn't until you hear your mate's heart cry that you will begin to understand them.
4. Forgiveness is choosing not to remember the wrong or hurt against your mate ever again. Forgiveness is a choice not a feeling or desire. Forgiveness is something you choose to do, no matter how you feel or what you want.
5. Accept your mate as they are. Do not try to change them.
6. Cover each other's weaknesses. Do not expose them.
7. Speak to your mate with the respect and courtesy that you give to the people you respect and admire the most.
8. When your mate enters the room, stop what you are doing and greet your mate with a smile.
9. Make it your commitment to enable your mate to get the most out of life. This means that it is your desire to say yes to the things your mate wants to do and to encourage your mate to do them.
10. Refuse to think or to speak critical thoughts about your mate. The ways you are different add to your life together, if you choose to accept these differences rather than to try to eliminate them.
11. Accept an invitation from your mate to do the things your mate enjoys doing. You don't have to like the activity to have a good time. You can enjoy your mate, enjoying you, doing with them the things your mate enjoys doing. This is the attitude and the behavior that will enable you to be a good date.
12. Think of the money your mate spends as a valuable investment in their success and happiness. This applies as long as the expenditures do not undermine the financial security of the couple. We value and enjoy different things. The things your mate spends money to obtain or to do have value because they value them. The fact that you do not spend money for these things does not make them valueless.
13. Think about the many ways your mate has enriched your life both present and past. Thank your mate for these things by referring to them often. Remember that you have come a long way together and overcome many difficult times. All the good things you now have you built together.

14. Hold, hug, and kiss your mate several times daily. This kind of acknowledgement and touching is nurturing to both of you. It takes little effort and time, but it adds enormously to the warmth and quality of your life together.
15. Go to bed together and hold each other and talk for a while before you go to sleep. If one person likes to go to bed earlier than the other, lie for a while beside the one who is early to bed then go back to your late night projects.
16. Never assume that you know what your mate is thinking, feeling, or trying to say. Wait for your mate to finish expressing their thought, and then ask your mate clarifying questions about what they are thinking, feeling or trying to put into words. Do not interrupt each other.
17. Listen attentively when your mate is speaking. Listen with your eyes by making and holding eye contact. Listen with your body by putting aside whatever you are reading or doing.
18. Give your mate time to be alone to do what they want to do.
19. Respect your mate's privacy by leaving their mail unopened, personal drawers, closets, etc., unexplored or disturbed.
20. Ask your mate about their day in an attitude of interest rather than a suspicious inquiry. Listen attentively while your mate talks about the things that filled their day.
21. Don't take anything personally or yourself so seriously.

From *Unless We Agree* by Dr. Orville E. Easterly

Life Source, Inc. - Counseling Services
2530 Douglas Blvd. Suite 160, Roseville, CA 95661
Phone: 916/784-0110 www.MarriageCounseling.com

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