



INTERRACIAL
RELATIONSHIPS
COLLABORATIVE

Cherishing Differences

KEYS TO THRIVING

INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

www.yaelandpaula.com

Your thriving relationship key questions:



"Are you there for me?

Do I matter to you?

Will you turn towards me and respond to me?"



Most interracial relationships don't end because of one big event. It's usually the small infractions that snowball over time. The connection loosens and arguments escalate. No one wants to be the victim, and nobody wants to be the cause of a wonderful relationship that has gone bad. So while love is necessary to establish your relationship it is not enough to sustain it. Lasting, joyful interracial relationships need good relationship skills - the kind that turn a relationship into a partnership and allow you to joyfully share a life together. These aren't skills we "know how to do" on our own. Most of us just imitate whatever we witnessed in our childhoods. You need to be ready.



Relationship improvement isn't always clearly observed or linear. The unconscious agenda of a committed relationship helps us grow in our capacity to move through childhood hurts and open to healthy intimacy and connection. So it's crucial not to expect this profound process to happen overnight. Shedding core, fear-based beliefs and defensive strategies is a lifelong journey. That being said, you can make a conscious choice to start on this path. The guidelines presented here may help you pave that way.



1



*Refrain from all
forms of blaming,
shaming and
criticizing your
partner.*

Criticism is the adult version of crying or having a temper tantrum; it is a natural built-in distress signal. With this primitive mode of communication we lose sight that we are inflicting pain, shame and pain on our partner. Criticism shuts down the heart. Kindness opens it up.





2

*Make
Amends.*

Another key point is successful amends. This means listening to your partner's grievances with an open and courageous heart. It is not the time to argue if their 'reality' is correct or their feelings are justified. It is a time to be humble, to deeply listen, and offer caring responses. It is a time to ask, "what can I do right in the moment to heal your pain?"



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3

*Map the
territory of
childhood
wounds.*

Our partner may be pushing our buttons, but how did our buttons get there in the first place? Mapping our wounded territory with our partner enables them to know when something they say or do will set off an emotional landmine. When we show our underbelly to our partner, without blaming them for our experiences of pain, they will want to amend any behavior that we might experience as harmful. This kind of tender sharing can radically reorient the relationship away from rewounding and toward healing past and present injuries and sensitivities.



4

*Don't push
when emotions
run high.*

When we sense ourselves getting angry or frustrated with our partner, our body may be in what is known as diffuse physiological arousal (DPA). Every major system in our body gets prepared to fight, flight, or freeze. It is enormously challenging to mend a distressing relational blip when in DPA because our bodies are in code red and in need of calming. The best action to take is to sooth ourselves. Take a walk, writing, drawing, yoga, meditation, calling a supportive friend but, do not trash your partner!



5



*Balance
giving and
receiving.*



This guideline involves empathic attunement to the needs of the other. It means taking a break from focusing on what your partner is not giving you and becoming curious about what you are not giving to your partner. Whatever is missing in the relationship is what you are not giving.



6



*Breathe
romance back
into your
relationship.*

Romance is taking the time and energy to do things that will bring a smile to our partner's face, ease the stress of daily life and remind them that we find them desirable and special. If you find yourself focusing on what your partner is not giving you, you will get caught up in a power struggle.



7



*Remember
you partner is
not you!*



You probably forgot that you and your partner are two totally different, separate, unique people. After the intoxication of romance fades away, the conflict you encounter may be traced back to a definition of love being, "When you satisfy my needs and be what I want you to be." You must bring new eyes to your partner and value their separate existence. Remember ... "Let there be spaces in your togetherness." Kahlil Gibran



8

*Hone
receptive
listening
skills*

It's amazing how people respond positively to us when we offer them evidence that we are genuinely listening. Generally people relax and become more willing to listen to our needs and feelings when they feel heard. Notice the people in your life who offer you the experience of being heard. Pay attention to what they are doing and saying. You will likely find that it is hard work and requires a lot discipline and practice. Mirroring is the best (and hardest) tool for practicing empathic listening.



9



*Your
Thriving
Relationship
Starts Here*

As you practice these ideas to make love work, make sure to be patient and gentle with yourself and your partner. Healing is possible in any relationship, but it requires dedication, gentleness, and perseverance. It is easy to lose faith in the process if we expect instant change. Slowing down and moving from highly reactive charged moments of distress to a compassionate listening and loving response is not for the faint of heart. It's a warrior's journey.





May you grow from strength to strength.

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