

SMALL CHANGES IN RELATIONSHIPS

CONSISTENCY, APPRECIATION, AND FOLLOW-THROUGH

* ONE PARTNER CAN BEGIN A HEALTHIER PATTERN

- One person cannot repair a relationship alone. One partner can still begin communicating more clearly, showing appreciation, and following through.
- The goal is not to manipulate the other person into changing. It is to practice the kind of partner you want to be.

* BEGIN WITH SPECIFIC APPRECIATION

- "Thank you for taking out the trash."
- "I appreciate how hard you worked today."
- "Thank you for your patience and understanding."
- "I noticed that you cleaned the kitchen. That helped me."

* ASK INSTEAD OF DEMAND

- "Can you help me with something?"
- "Do you have the capacity to talk for a few minutes?"
- "Would you be willing to handle this task today?"
- A request allows an honest answer. It is not a demand followed by punishment if the answer is no.

* ASK FOR SPACE WHILE PROTECTING CONNECTION

- Try: "I need time and space to finish this and settle. I can be ready to spend time together at 8:00 p.m."
- Then honor that time. If plans change, communicate before the agreed time and offer a realistic update.
- Reliable follow-through helps space feel less like rejection.

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* EXPECT CAUTION AT FIRST

- For the first few weeks or months, the other partner may wonder whether the change is genuine or whether you are preparing to ask for something.
- They may "side-eye" the change. Trust often needs repeated evidence.

* LET CONSISTENCY ANSWER THE QUESTION

- Express appreciation without attaching a request. Keep agreements. Admit mistakes.
- Respect boundaries. Return to conversations when you say you will. Complete your share.
- Do not say: "I have been nice all week, so why haven't you changed?" Healthy change is not a transaction.

* NOTICE SMALL SHIFTS

- Look for more appreciation, less defensiveness, clearer requests, dependable follow-through, and faster repair after conflict.
- Try: "I appreciate how we handled that. We disagreed, but we stayed respectful."
- Each person remains responsible for their own choices.

* IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE

- Warmth and communication skills cannot correct abuse, coercive control, stalking, intimidation, threats, or violence.
- In an unsafe relationship, the harmed partner is not responsible for leading by example until the abuse stops.
- Prioritize safety, confidential support, and professional guidance over couples exercises.