

# 7 STEPS

## to improve your relationship

- 1. AND vs. BUT:** Next time you are irritated with your partner, use the word AND instead of BUT. i.e. "I love your spontaneity -- AND it's hard for me when you invite people to dinner without warning." The word BUT shuts down a conversation whereas the word AND is an invitation.
- 2. WHAT'S NEW?:** To thrive, your marriage needs new experiences! This can be simple (a new restaurant) or complex (learn to snowboard). The important bit is to avoid letting your relationship get bored & restless. A bored relationship starts looking for trouble and/or creating it.
- 3. WHO ARE YOU?:** Do you love yoga but gave it up when you got married? No longer go to Timbers games because your partner hates crowds? It's important to remember who you were when you began this relationship and to stay connected to that history.
- 4. LET ME TELL YOU:** Now bring those external experiences back to your partner! Share what you learned, what you love, what frustrates you. If someone fell over in yoga class and you laughed then fell over yourself, tell your partner the story. If the game went into overtime and you lost your voice shouting, share your excitement.
- 5. TIME OUT:** We've all had those fights that are suddenly in Death Spiral. It is ALWAYS okay to take a breather while fighting - as long as you set a time to reconvene within the next few days. i.e. "I'm not able to do this right now. Let's get together tomorrow night to talk about it - can we meet up at 8?"
- 6. DATE NIGHT (it's a cliché because it's true!):** When you're not fighting, are you just cruising through your days together? You need a weekly or monthly date night. This is a night that is just about you as a couple. Take turns planning it or create it together.
- 7. GRATITUDE:** A recent study showed gratitude to be one of the biggest predictors of a successful long-term relationship. How do you show the person you love that you are grateful for them?

**I work with couples to help improve communication and connection. I offer both short and long term counseling options. Call or email for a free consult: 503.389.3302**  
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