

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Keys To a Healthy Relationship: Ways to Keep Love Alive

(NAPSA)—Relationships provide joyful benefits of companionship, support and love. But it takes commitment and time to cultivate a relationship that endures the daily demands and stress. When it comes to having an exciting, yet also healthy and lasting relationship, love is not the only thing that matters. Qualities such as communication, laughter and the art of seduction are critical.

According to clinical psychologist and certified sex therapist, Dr. Judy Kuriansky (known as “Dr. Judy” to her millions of fans), the foundation for a strong and healthy relationship is summarized in the “three T’s”:

- **Time:** Pencil in one hour at least two nights each week into your busy schedule to spend together—for just you and your partner to enjoy each other’s company.

- **Trust:** Honesty is important in a relationship so stay true to your word, don’t keep secrets, and don’t betray each other’s trust.

- **Talk:** Share feelings and talk about your experiences. Whether on the phone, over a quiet dinner, taking a walk, or in bed, always keep the lines of communication open.

When it’s time for “pillow talk,” Dr. Judy cautions that there are certain subjects that should be left outside the bedroom. These include such “hot button” issues as politics, gun control, financial problems, and previous relationships—sure to get you both riled up and douse any romantic flames. Intimate moments are not the time, and bedrooms are not the place, to try to convince your partner of your opinions.

So, what should couples discuss in bed? Appropriate subjects are found in the “four Cs”:



Dialogue is important for a healthy relationship.

- **Compliments:** Point out all the ways you adore and appreciate each other. Showing honest, heartfelt appreciation for your partner’s best qualities is an important part of making you both feel special and desirable.

- **Commitment:** When you’re cuddled in each other’s arms is a good time to discuss your mutual devotion. Suggest getting away for a second honeymoon or—the latest fad—a recommitment ceremony where vows are restated, often in front of family and friends.

- **Children:** If you’re thinking about having children, talk about the joy that children will bring to you as a couple and how it will intensify the excitement of your union. If you already have children, focus on their growth and many successes.

- **Contraception:** This is a chance for you to solidify your experience of sharing responsibility, and to show mutual consideration and love at its most intimate. In fact, it’s a good subject to discuss before getting into bed. Fortunately, there are new options available that not only help to facilitate open discussion, but also

serve to bring spontaneity back into intimate encounters.

According to a recent survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation of men and women ages 18 to 44, half report that they do not regularly use contraception. (The margin of error is plus or minus five percentage points.) Women are twice as likely as men to initiate conversations about contraception. Approximately 70 percent of men do not initiate conversations about contraception, leaving it up to the woman to begin the discussion. Yet, nearly 50 percent of the men and women surveyed report that having such intimate conversations about contraception actually improves their relationship and makes them more comfortable.

One contraceptive option an increasing number of women are trying is NuvaRing®, a flexible, transparent, vaginal ring that provides month-long protection against pregnancy. It is easy to use and can be discreetly applied by a woman in the privacy of her home.

It offers a number of benefits, including:

- A monthly option, not daily or weekly like other contraceptives.

- A continuous low dose of estrogen, which means less chance of unwanted side effects, such as headache, nausea, breast tenderness and irregular bleeding.

- Ease of insertion and removal. The exact position is not important for the product to be effective. As long as it’s in the vagina, it’s working.

For more information and prescribing information, speak with your health care provider and call 1-877-NUVARING or visit www.nuvaring.com.