



Relating feelings simply and directly opens communications. It may be helpful to describe the affect other people's behavior is having, without blaming or evaluating. Nonverbal communications – facial expressions, tone of voice, and posture -- can speak louder than words.

### **Develop an action plan**

An action plan can help a marriage.

- Learn to express sincere appreciation. Concentrate on a partner's individual strengths rather than weaknesses. Don't take each other for granted.
- Arrange to spend quality time with each other doing something fun. Laughter and play are great means of coping with stress.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Be available to listen even when a spouse is not ready to talk. A gentle touch or kiss can show support when there are no words.
- Share responsibility for decisions that affect the family. As a team come up with workable solutions and manage the consequences.
- Maintain flexibility in who does what in the family, share the burdens. Family members must do what makes sense for their family and not be swayed by what others might expect.
- Plan strategies to cope with crisis before it occurs. To maintain some control of the situation, try to anticipate changes and adapt before they happen.

Remember that when money gets tight and times get tough, couples need to show love and affection toward each other. If a marriage is to last, it must come first.

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