

# **The Key to a Great Relationship? You, at Your Best!**

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➤ **Be prepared.**

You have to be ready before you can help to create a great relationship. Are you managing your own life reasonably well? Are you a good friend? Are you sober? Have you thought about what you want in a partner, and what you want for your own life goals?

➤ **Be picky.**

Be very picky. You will never have the right relationship with the wrong person. Is your potential partner a decent human being? Does he or she show consideration to other people? Can your partner take responsibility for his or her actions? Would you want to be friends with this person, even there wasn't any physical attraction at all? Does your partner think you are terrific and special, or does he or she act like it is a big favor to be with you?

➤ **Be proactive.**

Don't allow yourself to be taken along for a ride on this relationship, no matter how exciting the ride may be. You are the co-creator of this romance, and it is up to you to be honest about what you want and need, to express your thoughts and feelings directly, to talk about what bothers you, and not to settle for anything less than respect from your partner.

➤ **Be patient.**

Many wedding ceremonies include the Bible quote, "Love is patient, love is kind." You don't have to be ready for marriage to heed this advice. Being patient means understanding the natural course of relationships – fabulous and thrilling in the beginning, but later requiring both partners to be willing to wait for a deeper relationship to unfold and to invest their true selves in the process. Do you give your partner the benefit of the doubt when you disagree? Do you approach your partner with courtesy and consideration, even when you are irritated or stressed?

➤ **Be positive.**

That doesn't mean taking the approach, "I'm positive you are WRONG!" Do look for the goodness in your partner. Don't overlook meanness or tolerate any sort of abuse or coercion (physical, sexual, or emotional), but don't automatically assume that your partner will do all the negative things that previous partners have done. Promote the best in your partner. If you have a good relationship, be grateful and mindful; express your appreciation often. If you are with the right person and have done your own preparation for a healthy relationship, you will be able to trust your partner and to enjoy the time you spend together, while continuing to include other friends and productive activities in your life. Enjoy!