

# What Happy Couples Do

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The most important factor in happy relationships is choosing how we think about our partner and our relationship. Actions are based on thoughts. We treat others well if we view them in a positive light. It may seem impossible in daily life to choose to think about our spouse as positively motivated. We tend to feel hurt if our partner does not do things our way. However, most of us fell in love and initially did choose to think of that same person in only in a positive light. We liked how different they were.

## What happy couples do: Six ways happy couples think

### Happy couples view their relationship from an “Us” perspective

They avoid thinking of difference as right versus wrong or win versus lose. They do understand if only one of them wins, the relationship loses. Example: “We have decided we do need to buy a house, but that is best for us to save for a down payment first”

### Happy couples assume positive intentions toward each other

The couples consider each other as their strongest ally, someone who is always on their side. Why would the person who loves you the most intentionally hurt your feelings? If they do hurt each other they assume the hurt wasn't intentional. Example: “When I asked if I looked fat and he answered ‘sure’ he was reading the paper and did not hear the question.”

### Happy couples respect each other’s point of view:



Happy couples continue to find each other's point of view interesting. The difference is part of the attraction. No one needs to change if you enjoy hearing a different point of view. Example: "There is a positive way to view each political party. It is not discrediting the other's passion if we vote for a differently."

### **Happy couples understand that there is more than one way to complete a task**

They accept each other as individuals who may have learned as children how to complete the same task in different ways. Completing a task may be viewed differently as well.

Example: Some individuals believe differently about basic housekeeping. "Everything has its place in the house and everything should be in its place" or "a house is only a home if it looks lived in." It is easy to make a positive case for both views, so happy couples compromise.

### **Happy couples communicate in adult-to-adult fashion**

Happy couples take personal responsibility for how they communicate with each other and avoid "parent-child" communication. They view each other as equal partners. Criticism is avoided.

Example: "Honey, I installed a timer on the bathroom light to save electricity." They avoid "you are so wasteful you always leave the bathroom light on."

### **Happy couples express their needs**

They each realize that they cannot read each other's mind. They are comfortable asking for what they need from each other. They assume that they will provide for each other if it is possible, even if it is difficult.

Example: "I will support you in starting your new profession even if it takes cutting back our style of living."

### **When we fall in love it seems natural**

We see our new partner in a positive light, think of the relationship in terms of "us," respect each other's viewpoints, and we understand that we each do things differently. We communicate as adults and express our needs.

It may seem difficult to think the best of our spouse in hard times. However, if we practice what happy couples do, it can become natural and the hard times will not be so hard.

