

# Shower your Valentine with love all year long

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(HealthDay)—You need to work on your relationship with your significant other all year round, not just on Valentine's Day, a relationship expert advises.

There are five key things you can do to keep your relationship healthy, according to Frank Provenzano, an instructor in psychology and a [clinical psychologist](#) at Furman University, in Greenville, S.C.

## **Share one new thing with your partner every day.**

It can be something big or small, Provenzano said in a university news release. But you should "let that person know you. And show a desire to know them."

## **For every negative thing you say to your partner, say five positive things.**

"And they should be genuine" positive comments—not you're loyal, thrifty and kind, he said. "They need to be reflective of the individual. If you can do 10-to-one, even better... When that five-to-one ratio begins to disappear, you're bordering on contempt and moving into rough seas."

## **Make rules, but update them when necessary.**

Whether the rules are about things such as who does which [household chores](#), or how to work together to accommodate each other's needs, the rules should change to adapt to new circumstances as the relationship changes.

## **Set expectations.**

"The reason for the rules is to set appropriate expectations. So as the [relationship](#) unfolds, nobody is surprised," Provenzano said. "People have to understand it's never going to be smooth sailing. There are always going to be things you bump up against. And the thing to remember is when you bump up against them, they need to be brought

out into the open. Don't wait for it to fester and become a criticism. When a criticism is received poorly, it turns into contempt."

## **Head off contempt.**

"By the time couples got to me, it was sort of a matter of trying to help them separate with no more damage, because contempt had become so severe," Provenzano said. It is important for couples to be aware and catch the contempt before it happens. So couples should "stay in touch with one another and keep talking with one another," he advised.

**More information:** The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley has more on [relationships](#).

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