

20 Relationship Tips for Adult ADHD

Marriage can be difficult, especially in this busy, overscheduled world we live in. Having ADHD present in the relationship can make the challenges even more pronounced. It is easy to become distracted, derailed, and overloaded and forget about the basics – the importance of nurturing your marital relationship. Here are some tips to help you get back to basics.

These 20 Tips on Marriage are excerpted from the book, MARRIED TO DISTRACTION by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and Sue George Hallowell, LICSW with Melissa Orlov, © 2010, by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D.

1. Remember what you like about the other person. Keep it in the back of your mind for those moments when you're angry.
2. Think not just about what the other person can do to make things better, but what you can do to make things better.
3. Couples are too busy these days. You've got to make protected time for each other, time just for the two of you, and you need to do this at least a half hour a week, preferably more. Many couples spend more time exercising than being with each other. One way around that is to exercise together!
4. Respect. Respect. Respect. Try always to treat your partner with respect. Repeated put-downs can become a habit and mark the beginning of the end of a relationship.
5. Play. Let yourselves set aside your inhibitions and be silly. Do foolish things together. Have a pillow fight. Play tag. Tickle each other. Tell jokes. Play pranks on each other. Never take yourselves too seriously. If you can laugh, you'll be ok.
6. Celebrate. Studies show that it is more important to be there for your spouse to celebrate good times than it is to be supportive in bad times. Of course, support in bad times matter, but it is even more predictive of success in a relationship if you can celebrate good times together.
7. Present a united front to your kids. Otherwise, you will undermine each other. This is not good for you and it is not good for the kids.
8. Say something nice, something you like about your spouse at least once a day.
9. Feel free to make fun of tips on marriage like these but don't make fun of taking seriously the idea of each day doing what you can to make your relationship better.
10. Give your spouse permission to have a life of his or her own outside the marriage, be it friends, groups, career, hobbies, or other activities.

11. When you see an argument or fight getting started, try to catch yourself and say to yourself, *"Let me try to do this a little differently this time."* If you usually yell, fall silent. If you usually get quiet, speak up. If you usually cry, don't. If you usually rage, try negotiating or listening instead. Just try to vary your usual way of responding.
12. Pay compliments. You can never pay too many compliments. Even if they are mocked or rebuffed, they will be appreciated.
13. Pay attention to the family of origin of your spouse. When you get married, you not only marry your spouse, but you also marry your spouse's family. The old cliché of the terrible in-laws is a destructive one. Make friends with your in-laws and try to have fun with them. Remember, also, they are your children's grandparents.
14. Try never to use money as a tool of power. This builds huge resentments over time.
15. Try to keep up an active sex life. If sex tails off, this may indicate conflict. Try to get at the heart of the conflict. Usually, sexual activity will pick back up.
16. Avoid the pattern of The Big Struggle. Attack and defend, defend, and attack. This can become a habit, a very demoralizing and destructive one.
17. Get to know about your spouse's childhood enough that you can understand current patterns in terms of what happened growing up. No one hit adulthood without having had a childhood first. And the child is the father or mother of the man or woman.
18. Have fun together. Do it however you want to do it but make time to have fun. Sounds obvious, but many couples don't do this.
19. T.I.O. Turn It Off. When you are together, turn off your electronic devices, at least for some of the time.
20. Remember, no marriage is constantly happy, perfect, and blissful. When times are tough, hang in there with each other. Get some alone time, but don't go into hiding. You need each other. It is easy to be there for each other in good times, but in hard times, this is when you really need one another. This is when you just plan do it whatever it is for the sake of the person you married and for your own sake as well.

Please don't give up. There is always, always hope.