

Relationship Coaching With Amy Newshore

How to Get the Most From Relationship Coaching

Congratulations on your decision to enter into Relationship Coaching to improve your relationship and to learn more about yourself and about your partner!

As a couple who is new to couples work, you may feel uncertain about what to expect and what might be expected of you. I have created this document to provide clarity and focus to our work.

Relationship Coaching

The major aim of relationship coaching is increasing your knowledge about yourself, your partner and the patterns of interaction between you.

Positive changes happen as you apply new knowledge and practice to break ineffective patterns and develop better, healthier ones.

Our focus will be on increasing your clarity about:

- The kind of life you want to build together
- The kind of partner you aspire to be in order to build the kind of life and relationship you want
- Your individual blocks to becoming the kind of partner you aspire to be
- The skills and knowledge necessary to do the above

Sustained Improvement in Your Relationship

In order for you to experience positive changes and sustained improvement in your relationship, you need:

- A vision for the life you wish to build together
- Self-connection and understanding of your own needs
- To have a life separate from your partner because you are not joined at the hip
- To truly work as a team
- To have the motivation to persist

- To recognize and appreciate the progress that each of you is demonstrating, both big and small
- To keep the focus YOURSELF and keep practicing better, more effective ways of relating

The Challenges in Couples Work

To create the relationship you really desire, there will be some common challenges.

One challenge will be **time**. It simply takes time to create a relationship that flourishes. Time spent in our sessions and in practicing new behaviors might encroach on some other valuable areas such as your personal or professional time.

A common challenge for each partner is about **being willing to be uncomfortable**. That means emotional discomfort, like going out on a limb to try new ways of thinking and doing things. Examples are:

Listening and being curious instead of butting in.

Speaking up instead of becoming resentfully compliant or withdrawing.

Positive changes take **persistence**. To remember to be more respectful, more giving, more appreciative etc. takes effort and practice.

Focus on Changing Yourself Rather Than Your Partner

Relationship Coaching only works if you focus on the goals for yourself than ones you have for your partner. It's human nature to try to change one's partner instead of oneself. The hardest part of focusing and working on yourself is accepting that YOU will need to improve your response to a problem (how you think about it, feel about it, or what to do about it). You, like many people, may rather focus on how your partner needs to change. However, keeping the focus on what YOU need to do differently is the key.

Since you can't change your partner and your partner can't change you, becoming a more effective partner YOURSELF is the most efficient way to change a relationship. It may be easy to be considerate and loving to your partner when the vistas are magnificent, the sun is shining, and breezes are gentle. But when it gets bone chilling cold, you're hungry and tired, and your partner is whining and sniveling about how you got them into this mess, that's when you get tested. You can join the finger pointing OR you can become how you aspire to become.

The more you focus on how your partner should be different and be the one to change, the less initiative you will take to change YOUR part of the patterns between you. When you EACH keep the focus on doing the needed work on YOURSELVES, that's when relationship transformation is possible.

Accepting and Normalizing Conflict

You and your partner will encounter differences between you. This is often when problems start to develop in a relationship. The inevitable differences between you will cause natural conflict. Conflict is normal. Dealing with conflict in a healthy way is the key to a more harmonious relationship. In our sessions, you will learn to handle differences in a positive and growthful way.

Communication

Communication requires both people to speak from the heart about what really matters to each. We are all responsible for how we express ourselves, NO MATTER how others treat us. Not surprisingly, communication is the number one presenting problem for couples.

Ineffective Communication

Most of the ineffective ways we communicate in relationships fall into the following categories:

We tend to:

- Blame and think we are right
- Dominate with our anger
- Disengage/withdraw
- Become compliant and feel resentful
- Criticize
- Threaten
- Be too vague
- Deny
- Stay stuck in confusion

These are the normal emotional reactions that we have all learned when we are feeling a threat or high stress, BUT, as you know, they always make things worse.

Effective Communication

This means you need to **PAY ATTENTION** to:

- ~ Managing your unruly emotions, such as anger, in a way that really works
- ~ Being aware of how you are communicating - if you are whining, blaming, criticizing, being vague, etc. (so you can interrupt this habit right then and there and do it differently)
- ~ Knowing what outcome you want from the discussion (Is it to convince your partner you are **RIGHT** or to come to some **UNDERSTANDING** between you?)
- ~ What you can do so that your partner will become more responsive to you

Communication is an area in life that is **ABSOLUTELY** not given enough attention, being that it is **SO** important in relationships of all kinds! I believe that our world can change for the better with each of us finding ways to have more and more positive interactions, especially during conflict (which often means we are facing differences between ourselves and another). Learning to communicate in healthy ways takes dedication and work. Well worth it for sure!

Some Final Thoughts...

Practice, practice, and more practice.

Practice the effective communication that you will learn in our sessions, practice self-soothing at times of anger and distress, practice being authentic and feeling friendly towards your feelings and needs.

Keep practicing both in sessions and out of sessions and you will get there. I will help you get there, if you are willing to put the good work in. Both you and your relationship are worth it, right?

Congratulations again on taking such an important step in choosing Relationship Coaching!

This writing was partly written by Ellyn Bader, from The Couples Institute, 2020 along with Amy Newshore's contributing ideas.